Lincoln Christian College

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CHRISTIAN DIFFICULTIES

IN THE

SECOND AND TWENTIETH CENTURIES

A STUDY OF MARCION AND HIS RELATION TO MODERN THOUGHT

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PREFACE

In these lectures it has been my object not so much to give an historical account of a particular form of Gnosticism, as to discuss the religious problems of to-day by the light of those of the second century of our era.

The modern dislike of creeds and dogmas is perhaps a temporary outcome of our scientific and historical methods; but it does not seem to me that any form of Christianity can survive if it abandons what have in all ages been considered the fundamentals of the Faith, such as the Divinity of our Lord in the sense accepted by the Universal Church, the fact of the Resurrection, and the indissoluble connection between the Old and New Testaments.

I have to acknowledge the kind assistance of the Master of Jesus and the Rev. Professor Nairne in suggesting various improvements, and of the Rev. J. H. Gray, Fellow of Queen's College, Cambridge, in correcting the proof sheets.

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CHRISTIAN DIFFICULTIES IN THE II AND XX CENTURIES

LECTURE I.

SURVEY OF THE SUBJECT.

"Is there a thing whereof men say, 'See this is new? It hath been already in the ages which were before us."

—Eccl. i. 10.

It is no easy matter to present the history of the early Christian Church in an attractive manner. Yet what subject ought to be more interesting than the account of the growth of an institution, and the progress of ideas, which have been factors of incalculable importance in the history of the human race! What should be more entrancing than the task of tracing back to its first beginnings an organization which, without any material resources, changed the whole course of civilisation by the force of conviction implanted in the minds of men; or the endeavour to discover from what germs

those ideas were developed, whose power upon human society and upon the soul of the individual has been so immense!

Nevertheless, it is scarcely possible to begin the study of Church History without a certain disillusionment. Nothing ought to be so enchanting, yet it must be confessed that at first it is often found to be very dry. Our sources of knowledge are so fragmentary, the details, to all appearance, so trivial, that the task of putting them together is as wearisome as the result at times appears inadequate. Frequently the historian can do no more than hazard a conjecture, from the scanty materials at his disposal, as to what actually happened, and rarely, indeed, can he give a vivid picture of what really occurred.

Truth to tell, the story of the first days of an institution like the Christian Church must at best be fragmentary, local, and personal. To take a comprehensive survey of the events is well-nigh impossible. The historian has to gather together, as it were, a number of separate specimens, to examine them closely before he accepts them; and, having done so, he has to form his own

conclusions. Necessary and profitable as this process is, it must be somewhat tedious.

At first sight Church History often appears to be no more than the recital of a succession of personal disputes. The Pauline Epistles, for example, the earliest and most interesting documents we have on the subject, are largely occupied by the discussion of such questions as the lawfulness of eating meats offered to idols, or the dress and behaviour of women in the Christian assemblies.

No character is more interesting than that of Origen; yet if we follow his career with attention, we notice almost with a feeling of disgust that the events of his later life turn mainly upon the Bishop of Alexandria suffering from what Eusebius terms "a touch of human frailty."[1] The noble life of St Cyprian was embittered by the jealousies and intrigues of some of his colleagues; and when we turn to Rome we find that the episode in that Church of martyrs and confessors, on which we possess the fullest information, affects mainly the moral character of the Bishop Callistus.

[1] Euseb. *H.E.* vi. 8.

It is much the same in the case of the history of opinion. A young student naturally hopes to learn from the early writers of the Church what they thought about the Faith they had so recently embraced; what Jesus Christ seemed to those who had heard of Him from eye-witnesses, from the men who had spoken with Him, and had actually touched Him.[1] Surely we might hope to gain "some knowledge of the inner life of the first Christians from the writings the Church has preserved!" Yet in this we are doomed to disappointment. From the Apostolic age to the close of the second century the best intellects in the Christian community were occupied with the task of refuting opinions, which appear to us fantastic in the extreme; and the student of Christian doctrine may be pardoned if he dislikes the idea of having to acquire some knowledge of the strange theories popularly known as Gnostic heresies. It is only by degrees that we are able to realise the fact that in the study even of the most personal ecclesiastical dispute, or of the wildest theory concerning Christian revelation, we are un-

[1] 1 John i.

avoidably confronted with the most interesting problems of to-day.

It is my intention in this course of lectures to ask you to consider some of the difficulties of the Church of the second century in the light of modern ideas concerning revelation; but before doing so, may I invite your attention to the remarkable similarity between the conditions of that early period and those which now prevail?

The main point of resemblance lay in the fact that in the second century the question "What is the essence of Christianity?" was still an open one. From the beginning of the third century till perhaps the middle of the nineteenth enquiry on this great subject was in a measure closed. Now circumstances have made it once more a problem which men must solve one way or another.

To speak generally, from the time of Irenaeus and onwards Christian men have been in agreement on several most important points. The four Gospels, for instance, have been regarded as undoubted authorities for the acts and words of our Saviour Jesus Christ. With the exception of a few disputed books, the canon of the

New Testament has been practically accepted by all. It has been generally allowed among Christians that in Jesus the prophecies of the Old Covenant have been fulfilled, and that He has brought Salvation to those who believed in His name. In a word, the most important articles of the Apostles' creed have been accepted as forming the substratum of the belief of the Christian Church.

This was not the case in the early part of the second century any more than it is at the commencement of the twentieth. Then as now men's minds were unsettled and confused, and the reasons for their perplexity were not dissimilar. In our case the progress of modern ideas in the spheres of history, science, and philosophy have parted us from the past by a chasm which we are now seeking to bridge; and in the second century the catastrophe of the overthrow of the Jewish polity had to all appearance created an impossible gulf between the Church and the Christianity of the first age.

For the fall of Jerusalem and the subsequent annihilation of Judaism as a political power must have had no small effect on the destinies of the Christian Church. The

Jewish believers who had been in direct communication with the Apostles of the Christ ceased to exercise their former influence; and the Gentiles, once scarcely tolerated, became henceforward the leaders of the new religion.

In the New Testament there is no lack of suggestions as to the difference in character between the Jewish and the Gentile Christians. In the controversy between St Paul and the Judaizers we naturally see the opponents of the Apostle in an unfavourable aspect, and we are disposed to regard them as the embodiment of hardness, intolerance and prejudice. On the other hand, if we look below the surface, we shall, I think, admit that the Jewish believer possessed many advantages over his Gentile brother. The long discipline under which his forefathers had lived had strengthened his character; the teaching of the Law embraced many fundamental truths of the Gospel; he had lived in an atmosphere of pure morality unknown to the Gentile. His faults and shortcomings were those of the strength engendered by a stern but manly training.[1]

[1] See Note 1 at end.

In this the majority of Gentile Christians were deficient. Not without reason does St Paul call the Corinthians "babes." The majority of them were provincials who had never had those incentives which had produced the manly qualities of their ancestors. The small Greek slave-owning aristocracies at constant war with one another, and always menaced by the great Persian monarchy, were nurseries of great men. Every individual had to be in turn statesman, soldier and navigator. On his personal efforts he felt that the welfare of his city depended. The result was that Greece produced some of the finest men this world has seen. But the degenerate provincial under the Roman rule had no such incentives to manliness. Civil duty and patriotism, almost the only good things his ancestral religion had inculcated, were no longer possible under a strong paternal government. Habits of sensuality had been handed down for generations and were strong in him. The free man was a slave at heart, and great as was the power of the new faith it could not in a moment eradicate all the weaknesses engendered by birth, habit and education.

We have only to notice the tone adopted by St Paul to such converts as the Corinthians and the Galatians to see how little stability of character and tenacity of belief were displayed by the first Gentile Christians.

The Church of the second century had become Gentile rather than Jewish, and consequently there had been a distinct deterioration in *morale* from the great days of its Apostolic founders.

In addition to this the doctrine and discipline of the various Christian communities was not by any means settled. Considering that countless small churches had been planted throughout the Empire ere the first century closed, it needs no great stretch of historial imagination to conceive how much diversity must have existed alike in belief and in practice. It could not be otherwise, when there was no developed creed, no regular canon of the New Testament, a tradition partly broken by the catastrophes which had overwhelmed Judaism, and when the Faith itself was being adapted to ever-changing conditions, and passing through that test, which time alone can give. Of the Christian converts,

differing as they did in station, in character, in nationality, in education, each man seemed to find in the new religion something peculiarly fitted to his own needs; and, at the same time, much which needed to be adapted to old ideas belonging to his early environment.

The whole history of religious opinion in the second century was one of flux and change. Christianity was but one of many faiths claiming the allegiance of mankind. New religions were springing up, and the older ones were assuming a new dress. Judaism, the worship of Serapis, the cults of Egypt, the beliefs of the ancient Orient, Mithraicism and the Mysteries were rivals striving to gain empire over the human mind.

This naturally affected the nascent Christianity of the age. What could be expected but that men of wide culture should make a study of all these rival faiths and discover germs of truth in all? An attempt was sure to be made to combine all into a single religion leavened by Christianity and embracing the peculiar merit of each. We at least can well understand how some of the Christians of the second century felt

that the Faith itself would be made more attractive, if decked in precious gems taken from the religious thoughts of men of every age and nation.

It was in this way that Gnosticism arose[1]—the product of an unsettled period of religious thought among men, who had in part lost the tradition of primitive Christianity, and had not yet accepted the written Gospel in place of the oral proclamation of the words and acts of the Christ. The recognition that other religious beliefs contained valuable truths only added to their perplexity; and in their bewilderment many turned eagerly to teachers who offered a solution to their doubts by presenting them with eclectic faiths composed of Christian, Jewish, Hellenic and Oriental elements.

Need I do more than hint at the parallel between this remote age and our own? We too realise that a veritable chasm seems to part us from the beliefs, not merely of our forefathers, but of the childhood of many. Nay, all seems shifting beneath our feet, and the creed of yesterday is hardly the creed of to-day. Like the men of the second century,

[1] See Note 2 at end.

who were isolated from one another in numerous small churches, the Christians of to-day are parted by our sectarian divisions, and the problem is how we can be brought to act in any sort of harmony. The parallel is strengthened by the fact that now, as in the second century, the dispute is not about obscure doctrines but about the fundamentals of the Faith. At that early period the New Testament was practically in existence, but it was not by any means the generally accepted standard of doctrine; just as in our days the case of the authority as well as the authenticity of the Scriptures is being weighed and tried. Then, as now, the question was asked, "Who was Christ?" and "What is Christianity?" Then, as now, the answers were widely different in character. From the close of this second century till long after the Reformation this great diversity of opinion did not exist. On many fundamental points Protestants and Catholics were at one. Their Christology, their acceptance of the New Testament, their belief in heaven and hell, in the efficacy of prayer, were not dissimilar. But before the days of Irenaeus and Tertullian, as well as now, the differences among

individual Christians lay far deeper, and it is only by bearing this in mind that it is possible for us to account for the fantastic characters in which the Faith made its appearance in the systems of the different Gnostic teachers.

The widest differences to-day are not those which part sect from sect, but individual from individual. If we were to visit each congregation of worshippers in this town to-day, and were gifted with the power of reading men's hearts, we could classify them by tests far more effective than those of sectarian opinion. In every congregation we should find the man who was there more from custom than from conviction; the man who in heart believed though his intellect rebelled; the worshipper who made his creed adapt itself to his private conviction; as well as he to whom all that was said or done was a living reality. These are the actual religious differences among us, forcing us back to the early days of the Faith to seek for the Essence of Christianity.[1]

[1] It is significant that the same controversies are agitating all branches of the Church in its widest sense. The Orthodox Church has had trouble with Count Tolstoy, and the Roman Catholic with the late Dr Mivart. The Anglican Church and

Before going further, I ask your leave to state what I believe to be the great religious difficulties of our time, in order that we may endeavour to find whether the history of the progress of Christian thought in the second century can provide us with any assistance. The real problem of early Church History seems to be this: How was it that there emerged from the storm and stress of conflicting opinions a form of Christianity which has preserved its essential features to the present day? And then comes the practical question of such importance to all of us: Are these essential features, a personal God, a divine Christ and four authoritative gospels, necessary to Christianity?

The problems of our day can be stated under three main heads:—

I. First, I would place the very general feeling that God, so far as we know Him in Revelation, and it may be said in Nature also, seems to fall short of our human standard of Justice. The analogy between the Being, whom Nature shows to those who admit that

the Protestant bodies, owing to the more unfettered opinions of their adherents, have had to face the difficulty in acuter forms.

her laws are administered by an Intelligent Mind, and the God of the Scriptures of the Old Testament at least is unmistakable. In neither do we find absolute justice, not to mention benevolence; and men perforce ask themselves, "Is God as we know Him really just?"[1]

II. The second difficulty goes to the very root of the religion we profess. Our Lord Himself propounded it in his searching question to the Scribes, "What think ye of the Christ?" What think ye of Him on Whom your hopes are centred, of the Saviour you expect? To us Christians it means, "Who is the Master you profess to follow? Is He, as the Church has taught with no uncertain voice—since the close of the second century, as all will admit—the wonder-working, crucified, risen, and ascended Saviour, the historic manifestation of God in man?"[2] Or has a great mistake been made, and was Jesus of Nazareth no more than exceptional, an unique man; and the Christ-ideal the supreme effort of human imagination?

III. A third question remains, which each

[1] See Note 3 at end.

[2] See Note 4 at end.

one of us must practically answer. If we refuse to entertain thoughts on such high subjects as the Nature of God and the Divinity of Jesus Christ, we yet have to consider what we ourselves are. What am I? Am I the creature of circumstance and environment, or a being really responsible for my thoughts and actions? Have I any existence apart from the body? Are my natural instincts my proper guides, or do they lead me astray? Have I had a previous existence? Shall I have a conscious personality after death?

Put these questions to yourselves, especially the last, and try and give a true answer to each, and judge whether they do not bring into relief the extreme limitation of the human mind, which is incapable of replying with certainty on matters which so intimately concern itself.

Nor can we think of these great and pressing problems without wondering why thoughtful and religious men seem to persist in remaining alienated from one another on mere questions of custom and church government.[1]

[1] Without expressing approval of Canon Henson's schemes for religious reunion, I cordially agree with him when he

In the early part of the second century there lived a man who, despite his errors, deserves our gratitude for calling the world's attention to some of the most perplexing problems in the sphere of thought. The facts of his life are obscure, and I must ask your indulgence if, instead of attempting to balance the statements regarding him one with another, I give what seems a probable view of his career.

Marcion was a native of Pontus, perhaps a Christian by birth, and a Stoic by training and inclination. He was pure in life and austere in practice, and desired to strengthen, and not like some Gnostics to relax, the discipline of Christianity. His date is uncertain, but he is said to have come to Rome in the days of Hyginus. The fact, however, is that the beginning of Marcionism was so early that the Church writers of the end of the second century, who are our best authorities, do not seem to be able to tell the story of its com-

says, "The problem of the twentieth century is the discovery of religious union based on the toleration of open questions among Christian men, and the firm tenure of the essential elements of the Christian faith, etc."—"Godly Union and Concord," p. 41.

mencement.[1] The founder of the movement is said to have been a Syrian named Cerdo. Marcion, on his arrival at Rome, at once attracted attention. He was a man of means; perhaps his father was a Christian bishop. It is possible that the fervent piety and brilliant talents of Marcion made such an impression on the presbyters of Rome that they thought of him as a candidate for the bishopric. That he began his heresy from unworthy motives is not easy to believe. He seems to have been thoroughly perplexed by our Lord's saying about the new patch of cloth and the old garment, and to have interpreted it as teaching that Christianity and the teaching of the Old Testament are irreconcilable. Tertullian says that till the days of Eleutherius Marcion held the Catholic Faith.[2] The facts concerning Marcion are at times told of Cerdo, so that everything is confused. One circumstance related of both is that after promulgating the heresy, one or other

[1] "Dictionary of Christian Biography," Article *Marcion*, by Dr Salmon. Tertullian says that Marcion was "Stoicae studiosus," "De Praescrip," xxx. Hippolytus says he was a follower of Empedocles, and borrowed his two principles from the "friendship and discord of this teacher," *Philosophumena*, vii. 17.

[2] Epiphanius, *Haer.* xlii. 1. Μονάζων γὰρ ὑπῆρχε καὶ υἱὸ ἐπισκόπου τῆς ἡμετέρας ἁγίας καθολικῆς ἐκκλησίας.

of them desired to return to the fold of the Church. But the stern discipline of antiquity would not permit this. So great an offender could not be pardoned till he had laboured to undo the consequences of his acts and words.[1] So it may be that Marcion spent his later life in trying to bring back those who had followed him in his error, and died before he could accomplish his task. May we not hope that by his repentance he secured a place in the Church in Heaven!

We can think more kindly of Marcion than did the old Church fathers; perhaps we can judge him more fairly than they. Far as the events of his life are removed from us by time, they seem almost to belong to our own age. A man brought up amid Christian influences in remote Pontus goes to Rome and plunges into the intellectual turmoil of the age. He becomes Cerdo's pupil. He studies the Scriptures, and by-and-by he formulates a plausible theory

[1] Tertullian, "De Praescrip," xxx.

[2] Tertullian, "De Praescrip," xxx., tells the story of Marcion. Iren. Haer. III. iv. 2, says that Cerdo frequently confessed his sin and was reconciled to the Church, but afterwards began again to teach his doctrines in private.—Euseb. *H.E.* iv. 11.

of religion based on a brilliant piece of Biblical criticism. His book on the "Antethesis of the Law and the Gospel" appears. The young, ardent, ascetic scholar finds many disciples. The Church casts him out and a school gathers round him. His views are carried by his pupils throughout the empire. Marcionite churches are founded in all lands.[1] Then the master sees that he has erred, and humbly begs to be restored to the Church. But he is told that he must remedy the harm he has wrought. He cannot enter the Church till he has restored those whom he has led astray, and he dies a penitent, yet an exile from the house of God.

Yes! Marcion taught in the second century, but his story finds an echo in our own day. Many a young teacher has had the same experience. How often are men fascinated by the theories of modern criticism, and by the new light they throw upon religious problems! How ready some of us are to communicate the new ideas

[1] Epiphanius says that in the fourth century Marcionite churches existed in Rome, Italy, Egypt, Palestine, Arabia, Syria, Cyprus, the Thebaid, Persia, and in other places.

to others before we have duly weighed them ourselves! How prone we are to delight in shattering what we consider to be the worn-out creeds of early days, and to show how far modern theology has advanced upon the narrowness of the ages of credulity! How contemptuous, alas! we often show ourselves to the beliefs of men of greater learning and riper experience than ourselves!

Far from me be it to decry the value of modern theological research. Never can we forget the debt we owe to those bold thinkers who have freed us from many misrepresentations of religion, which weighed so upon the minds of our forefathers. But is not the story of Marcion at times a salutary warning? He, like some of us, craved for novelty. His scheme was original, but it failed to satisfy him, if he came back to the old faith of his youth and spent his latter days in trying to counteract the spirit his own rash pronouncements had aroused.

I am free to own that Marcion's opinions are not merely striking for their audacity, but from the way in which men were

brought by them face to face with the most important spiritual problems.

Stated briefly, Marcion's views were as follows:—

He believed in two, if not three principles. The God of the Jews represented one of these. He is the Creator of the world and its ruler, but not the true God. In fact both the constitution of Nature and the revelation of God to the Israel prevented Marcion from acknowledging that such a Being was absolutely just. To him the God of the Jews and the Creator of this world seemed limited in both power and wisdom. He might be called just, but he could not be considered as absolutely good or merciful.[1]

But Marcion's conscience told him that God must be good, so he imagined a truly perfect God far above the Creator of this world, and it was He that Jesus Christ came to reveal. The Lord's appearance was a sudden one. He came down from above into the Creator's world unknown even by

[1] Alioquin certi Marcionem dispares deos constituere; alterum iudicem, ferum, bellipotentem, alterum mitem, placidum, et tantummodo bonum atque optimum.—Tert. "Adv. Marc." i. 6.

the Maker of the world. His teaching provoked the jealousy of the Creator, and the Jews were incited to crucify Him. But the sufferings of the Christ of the Unknown God had no reality; like His appearance they were illusory, for He was but a phantom, in the form of man, and no true human being.[1]

As the Creator had foretold the coming of a Christ, and as Jesus had not fulfilled the Messianic predictions of the prophets, another Christ was still to come in the person of the Jewish Messiah. Thus Marcion imagined two Gods and two Christs.[2]

Love was the essential attribute of the True God, as justice characterised the Creator, and the final consummation would be when those who were worthy entered into the heaven of love, whilst the just men who obeyed the Creator's law would with Him enjoy that inferior bliss for which alone they were fitted. In support of his views Marcion dealt with the Scriptures in a bold spirit of criticism. The Old Testament seemed to him to reveal a God whose

[1] See Note 5 at end.

[2] See Note 6 at end.

conduct was marked by conduct at times harsh, unreasonable and inconsistent. This could not be the God revealed by Christ, and therefore the writings of the old covenant were set aside. In the Gospels Christ was represented as fulfilling the Old Testament, and they consequently were the work of men who had but an imperfect knowledge of the meaning of our Lord's teaching. The true doctrine was only to be found in St Luke's Gospel, and not even there till it had undergone a severe expurgation. Marcion accordingly re-edited it, leaving out the opening chapters relating to the birth of Jesus Christ, and emending various passages. This emended gospel with ten of the Pauline epistles was the basis of the Marcionite system.

It may well be asked what good purpose can be served by bringing forward the views of an obscure Gnostic heretic, which have at best an historic interest as illustrating the development of doctrine in the Church, but do not bear on the questions of our day. Who believes now in a duality of God? Who is troubled by doubts as to the reality of the body of our Lord? The Old Testa-

ment has been subjected to more scientific criticism than Marcion dreamed of, and the problem concerning the authenticity of St John's Gospel and the synoptic narrative turns on points of which the men of the second century could have had no conception.

There is something to be said for such objections as these; nevertheless it is my purpose with God's help to use this obscure controversy between the Marcionites and the Catholic Church mainly for the purpose of suggesting the solution of present day problems. It will be my object, therefore, when I state the arguments adduced in support of or against Marcionism, to remind you from time to time of the doubts which perplex our age; and to invite you to consider whether they differ materially from the difficulties men experienced in the first days of the Faith. Do not, however, for this reason imagine that I am under such a delusion as to believe that the refutation of this ancient heresy can prove a panacea for our present doubts. Every age has its peculiar trials demanding peculiar treatment; and the past cannot by itself resolve the perplexities of the present. But it is encouraging from time

to time to appeal to history, and to see that our troubles are not so unique as we suppose them to be, but that grave religious doubts have presented themselves in every age, differing more in their guise than in their essence, and that a solution has been generally found for them. The fact that religious doubts prevail among us can be no reason for despair to those who know the perils which the Faith has escaped in the past.

The importance of the investigation which we are about to embark upon is the greater when men are on all sides demanding that the necessary articles of the Christian Faith should be re-stated in such a way as to make them accord with our present scientific and critical knowledge. By considering the arguments used in another age we may perhaps be enabled to decide what may be safely abandoned, and what cannot be given up, without our losing hold upon the fundamentals of Christianity.

It appears that, at least among members of the Church of England, there is a tendency to overlook the fact that an historic continuity of government is of little importance compared to the maintenance of an historic faith,

and that serious as the loss of apostolic ministry would be, this would be a mere trifle compared with the surrender of any essential portion of the Creed. It is of the utmost importance for all of us to bear in mind that which Tertullian so earnestly insists upon, that Christianity is not a philosophy with a teaching to be changed with the varying conditions of life, but that it is a religion based upon the common needs of humanity, with its roots implanted in the heart of man from his first appearance as a responsible being. That it is a natural religion brought to perfection by a revelation of God to man, beginning with his creation and culminating in Jesus Christ. Even, therefore, if we grant that the belief of Christians has suffered from the presence of parasitic accretions which have occasionally to be ruthlessly removed, to save, as it were, the life of the tree, it contains necessary truths without which no real Christianity can exist. To discover what these are must be the object of every investigator in the field of the history of the origins of Christianity

Before reverting to the subject of Marcion's views may I ask you to direct your attention

to Tertullian, whose arguments against this heresy will be the main subject of these lectures.

There is no more remarkable product of early Christianity than the Church of the Roman province of Africa. It appears suddenly as a highly organized community of men of Latin speech and Roman sympathies at a time when the Roman Church was under Greek influences. In the second century Carthage was one of the great schools for advocates, and for a long period her greatest Christian teachers were Roman lawyers.[1] Such men saw in the Faith something to be arranged, systematized and defined: to them its duties were more important than its dogmas. Whilst the Greek-speaking philosophers who embraced the Gospel saw in Jesus the revealer of the Nature of God, the Latin trained in Roman law recognised rather the Legislator. Latin Christianity has thus been rather practical than speculative, a life rather than a creed. In breadth of view, in philosophic insight, in sweet reasonableness the

[1] Archbishop Benson, "Cyprian," p. 4. No accessions indeed to the Christian ranks were more important than the conversions of the great lawyer.

Eastern fathers have the advantage; but in robust energy and practical wisdom Western piety is superior.

Tertullian, an African by birth and a Roman lawyer by education, exhibits the qualities both of his country and of his profession. He is full of that fiery zeal which was always characteristic of the African Church; and if at times the fierce spirit of some Carthaginian ancestor reveals itself in his writings,[1] we cannot fail to recognise that he was imbued with the desire of making Christianity a moral force in the world, with a hatred of cruelty and injustice, and a delight in those evangelical virtues by which human life is ennobled. If in some respects the zeal of Tertullian passes the limits of discretion, if his judgment is warped by prejudice, he constantly gives proof that his naturally fine character had been strengthened and purified by his faith in Christ.

Though of totally different temperament and living under different conditions of

[1] As in the famous passage at the end of the treatise, *De Spectaculis*, c. 30, which Gibbon quotes with such relish.—"Decline and Fall," ch. xv.

Church life (for they were not even contemporaries), Tertullian and his opponent were in many ways alike. Both were thoroughly in earnest, and strove to make their faith a living reality; both based their religion on personal experience; both were eager to strengthen the discipline of Christian life; neither feared to die for the sake of Christ. The difference lay in the fact that Marcion was imbued with the philosophy of the East, Tertullian with the legalism of the West; Marcion's religion was sentimental, Tertullian's practical. Yet despite of this, there was what one may almost venture to call a vein of poetry in the latter. Tertullian had a great reverence for Nature; in his admiration of the wonders of Creation he is quite modern, and he is often singularly in tune with much of the scientific thought of our own day.

As a controversialist, he displays some of the defects perhaps inherent in the legal mind. He argues as if he were in a court of law, rather than as addressing men and women ignorant of the laws of his early profession. For this reason he sometimes

fails to carry us with him, from his inability to show that sympathy with error which often proves so powerful a factor in winning back those who have gone astray.

But in his treatise against Marcion, Tertullian's faults are not often revealed. The heresy was a formidable one, and the advocate of the Church was on his guard. With masterly skill he dissects each argument and exposes every fallacy of his opponent. Nor is Tertullian unjust to Marcion. The general impression after reading the treatise is that Marcion's case was by no means a weak one, and that it needed all Tertullian's skill to combat it.

Far as the disputants are removed from us, different as the terms in which they expressed themselves are to those to which we are accustomed, I venture to suggest that both are of peculiar interest to our age.

The second century was characterised by the prevalence of a humaner spirit than that of earlier times. The world had gained as well as lost by the disappearance of the political virtues of antiquity. A greater sympathy with suffering, due to an increasing realisation of the common brotherhood of

man, had made its appearance. Many then thought that the God of Israel showed the harshness of an earlier age, whilst in Christ they acknowledged the tender love and pity, for which the heart of man yearned. Can we wonder at a sharp distinction being drawn between the Old and New Covenants, and at Christ being regarded as the Emissary of a God of Love into a world of suffering ruled by some harsher deity?

Are we not disposed to read the Old Testament in the same partial fashion, and to condemn it as revealing a harsh and imperfect God? Do not we at times draw too sharp a line between justice and mercy, forgetful of the fact that undiscriminating benevolence is neither justice nor mercy? Does not our imagination, like Marcion's, sometimes create a god whom we endow with those attributes which we deem most appropriate to him?

We can understand Marcion when he declares that the God of the visible universe is not absolutely beneficent in His dealings, and therefore cannot be the true God. It is true that Marcion's standpoint is that matter is inherently evil, whilst our observa-

tion of natural laws seems to show that the belief which our fathers held, that they revealed nought save God's goodness, cannot be sustained. Yet our conclusion is much the same as his, namely, that God as revealed in Nature does not completely satisfy our demands.

We share too in Marcion's feelings towards the God revealed in the Old Testament, and the objections which he raised against a true revelation having been made to Israel are quite modern in their tone. He notices the want of perfect knowledge represented in Jehovah, when He asks, "Adam, where art thou?"; in the sanction given to vindictive laws; in His capricious choice of favourites; in His indulgence in human feelings.

For this reason we follow Marcion in drawing a far sharper line between the old and new dispensation than did the orthodoxy of former days. There is a tendency among us to regard the Old Testament of little spiritual value, and to look upon the appearance of Jesus of Nazareth as a fact by itself. Like Marcion, modern thought is influenced by the idea that Jesus was not the Messiah foretold to the Jews, but that

His followers persisted in seeing a fulfilled prophecy in each event of His life—in His birth, His ministry and in His death. To Marcion, Jesus was a sudden phenomenon in the world's history. He was not the flower of the ancient dispensation, for whose sake the wondrous tragedy of Israel's agony had been enacted. His message was entirely new—not the perfect utterance of that which God had in many portions and in diverse manners spoken by His prophets. His followers had not been banded by Him into a society to whom the guidance of the Spirit had been promised, but had misunderstood Him, till Marcion came to explain by a critical examination of the records what was really the significance of the work of Christ. How modern all this appears to be!

Finally, Marcion taught that Jesus Christ was not a real man, but that his appearance was that of a shadowy being without a true body. As a phantom He came among men, as a phantom He hung on the cross,[1] as a

[1] But Marcion's docetism is all the more remarkable, that, under Paul's guidance, he put a high value on the fact of Christ's death upon the cross.—Harnack, "History of Dogma," vol. i. p. 276, E.T.

phantom He was laid in the grave and appeared to rise from the dead.

Here, at least, you may say we have no parallel in modern thought; the attempt to draw one would be an exercise of perverse ingenuity. The modern view is that Jesus was not only man—that the Church admits—but that, save for a peculiar genius for religion, there was nothing in Him different from other men. He died a victim to religious jealousy, but the enthusiasm of His disciples persisted in believing that He had triumphed over death. In this sense He is risen. His teaching—so far as it can be known — still lives. His Spirit still animates men's hearts. He is still the ideal of human goodness. In this sense, but in no other, His resurrection is a reality.

What is this but a form of Docetism? What is this Jesus? Not the Christ of the Gospels, who is declared to have been the Word of God made flesh and dwelling among us, who died for the sins of the world, who rose from the dead that we might rise with Him. The Christ whom men now would present to us is not the Jesus of history, but a man concerning whom little can be

known with certainty, serviceable as an ideal of human excellence, but hardly more than an imagination of the mind of man. What do we know of this Christ?—a few words, a few precepts common to the morality of all ages—nothing more."[1]

Yet Marcion worshipped the Christ of his imagination, and his followers cheerfully laid down their lives for His sake. They did not, like the baser but more logical Gnostics, abandon themselves to lust and impurity. Their rules of life were sterner than those of the Catholic Christians, and Marcionism had its martyrs.

It is the same in our day. The men who deny the historic Christ reverence Him. Their morality is most strict, none can gainsay their zeal and enthusiasm. If they are illogical in their admiration, their worship of Him in whom they profess so little belief is an inconsistency all must commend. The fact is, they, like the Marcionites, whilst considering themselves leaders of criticism, in their hearts worship the Christ whom they learned to love in the simple lessons of the Gospel. Often, when men profess to know

[1] See Note 7 at end.

only the fantastic Christ of the last critic, they really believe in the Jesus of whom they were taught at their mother's knee.

In Tertullian there is naturally much that is not applicable to our age. All his views have not stood time's test. But in any writer whose natural good sense is guided by moral enthusiasm there must be a permanent element; and Tertullian's genius is such that we admire him even when unable to endorse all that he says.

In these lectures I have a difficult task before me, and one I should not have undertaken but for my belief that a plea on behalf of the historic faith should be made. I am well aware that the difficulties in the way of accepting the Creed of the Church are to many well-nigh insuperable, and far from me be it to decry the labour of those who desire to reconstruct it and restate it in such a way as to render it easier of acceptance. A justifiable admiration for the wonderful discoveries in the physical world, or for the progress of critical study in the domains of literature and history, has made many a true believer anxious to meet investigators in a liberal spirit, and to surrender all that can

be legitimately abandoned in order to retain thinking men within the pale of the Universal Church. Willingly do I admit that this course is not only wiser, but also more truly Christian than the old method of making creed the test of character, rather than character the proof of creed. But at the same time I believe that there are things which the Christian Church can never give up.

When criticism has said its last word the Bible must be to Christians one revelation of the Creator's will, and the identity of the God of the Old and New Covenant must be upheld. The difference lies in this—in the Old Testament there are the germs of truth, in Christ we advance into a clearer light, and by the Spirit which He sent from the Father we are still progressing to the full knowledge of the truth.

Nor can we give up the essentials of our creed. That Jesus Christ the only Son of God for us men and for our Salvation came down from Heaven and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary and was made man : that He died for us and rose from the dead . . . and that these are not imagina-

tions but historic facts.[1] Time after time have they been questioned and explained away. The attempt to do so is no new one; for though man advances in knowledge his mind seems to work in the same grooves, and when we think ourselves most original we often find that the old Preacher was right when he said, "Is there a thing whereof men say, see this is new? It hath been already in ages which were before us" (Eccl. i. 10).

[1] See Note 8 at end.

LECTURE II.

THE RIVAL GODS.

"Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the Kingdom of God as a little child, he shall in no wise enter therein."—St Mark x. 15.

It can hardly be fortuitous that the two early Christian theologians most deeply imbued with Western ideas dwell, not on the immanence of the Divine Logos in the world, but on the knowledge of God which is natural to mankind.[1] As, according to the science of jurisprudence, a desire for justice lies at the foundation of all law, so those Christian writers, who were imbued with the spirit of the Roman law, regard revelation as the publication of natural religion. The famous exclamation of Tertullian at the conclusion of the argument that the words which

[1] Maine's "Ancient Law," ch. iii.: The ius gentium originally meant something entirely different from what it did in the minds of the philosophic lawyers of Tertullian's age.

rise spontaneously to a man's lips are a confession of God's unity—the *testimonium animae naturaliter Christianae* — occurs again in substance in his treatise against Marcion.

Keeping this idea constantly before him, Tertullian tries to refute Marcion's theory of the existence of an unknown God, as distinct from the Creator, by maintaining that it was not possible to conceive of the True God concealing Himself from mankind.

Before commencing his argument, Tertullian undertakes to define what is meant, when we speak of God. He says God is recognised by the universal conscience of mankind as "The Supreme Power, existing from all eternity unbegotten and uncreated, without beginning or ending."[1]

Such a definition precludes the possibility of conceiving of more than One God. That which is Supreme must also be unique: in short, "either God is One, or He has no existence."[2]

[1] Quantum humana conditio de Deo definire potest, id definio, quod et omnium conscientia agnoscet, Deum summum esse magnum, in aeternitate constitutum, innatum, infectum, sine initio, sine fine.—I. 3.

[2] Proinde Deus cum summum magnum sit, recte veritas nostra pronuntiavit: Deus si non unus est, non est.—I. 3.

A variety of arguments, however, are advanced by the Marcionites to show that their theory of a duality of Gods has something in its favour; but these Tertullian has no difficulty in refuting, nor need they delay us.[1] He really joins issue with his opponents on the question whether it is possible for the True God to remain unknown? He begins by laying down as an axiom, "If God is all we admit Him to be, He cannot be unknown, because He is perfect greatness; nor ought He to conceal Himself, because He is perfect goodness."[2] As for the Creator of the World, it is self-evident that He exists; whilst the Unknown God of Marcion gives us no proof whatever of His Being. At best His existence is uncertain, and to discover what we do not know by arguing from what is doubtful can lead to nothing profitable.[3]

[1] Tertullian concludes this part of his argument thus: "Haesisti, Marcion, in medio Ponti tui aestu. Utrinque te fluctus involvunt veritatis. Nec pares nec dispares deos sistere potes. Duo enim non sunt; quod pertineat proprie ad numeri retractatum.—I. 7.

[2] Sed breviter proponam et plenissime exsequar, praescribens, Deum ignorari nec potuisse, nomine magnitudinis, nec debuisse, nomine benignitatis.—I. 9.

[3] Duo nunc dei proponuntur, ignotus et notus. De noto vacat quaestio. Esse enim constat. De ignoto instat alter-

But the knowledge of the Creator has existed from the very beginning. Moses, says Tertullian, may have been the first to write about God; but neither he, nor even Abraham, was the first to know Him, for the soul was before prophecy.[1] "God will never be hidden; God will never be wanting; He will be always understood, always heard; He will be even visible in what manner He chooses. God has proofs: our very being, the universe wherein we dwell are witnesses to Him. So all the time He is not unknown, He is proved to be God and One, while Marcion's God is to this day trying to be proved."[2]

The next argument of Marcion is that God is not to be sought by external proofs: He can be best known by the evidence of His own character. To him the world seemed unworthy of a perfect

catio: potest enim et non esse. . . . If we attempt to deduce arguments from uncertain premises "Series implicabitur quaestionum."—I. 9.

[1] Ante anima quam prophetia.

[2] Nunquam Deus latebit, nunquam Deus deerit. Semper intelligetur, semper audietur; etiam videbitur, quomodo volet. Habet Deus testimonia, totum hoc quod sumus et in quo sumus. Sic probatur et Deus et unus, dum non ignoratur, alio adhuc probari laborante.—I. 10.

God,[1] whose nature was sufficiently revealed in Jesus; no further proof than this being needed of God's benevolence.

Tertullian, on the contrary, maintains that nothing can be external to God; for if He exists at all, everything exists in Him, and He can only be known by His creations. Marcion asks men to believe in a God, who is more incredible than the deified men of antiquity. They, at least, are said to have done something for the benefit of humanity, whereas Marcion's God has not so much as produced a single vegetable in proof of His existence.[2] "Why has he not done so?" asks Tertullian; "either because he could not or he would not; there is no alterna-

[1] "The world as a fact now bewilders you . . . by a chaos of unintelligible fragments, and of scattered events; now it lifts up your heart with wondrous glimpses of ineffable goodness, and now it arouses your wrath by frightful signs of cruelty and baseness."—Royce, "The World and the Individual." This seems to express what Marcion must have felt.

[2] Igitur et hoc ex forma Creatoris expostulo, Deum ex operibus cognosci debuisse alicuius proprii sui mundi et hominis et saeculi, quando etiam error orbis propterea deos praesumpserit, quos homines interdum confitetur, quoniam aliquid ab unoquoque prospectum videtur utilitatibus et commodis vitae.—I. 11. And "Unam saltem cicerculam deus Marcionis propriam protulisse debuerat," etc. . .

—*Ibid.*

tive."[1] Neither is worthy of the True God, and rather than believe in such a God as Marcion preaches, it would be better to cease to acknowledge that God existed.[2]

Tertullian deals next with Marcion's statement that this universe is not worthy to reveal God, by showing that this was not the opinion of the Greeks, whose very language testifies to the beauty and order of the world (κόσμος),[3] nor of their philosophers. They, on the contrary, pronounced the very elements, which compose the world, to be divine.[4] After declaring that this attempt to depreciate the visible world is contrary to the sentiment of every race of man, Tertullian, with the reverence for Nature so often shown by him, exclaims that no one, who examines the humblest objects, the flower in the hedgerow, the little shell fish, the wing of a common water

[1] Duplex ista videatur necesse est, ut aut noluerit condere quid aut non potuerit. Tertium cessat.—I. 11.

[2] Deum dignius credam non esse quam esse sine causa. —I. 12.

[3] Ut ergo aliquid et de isto huius mundi indigno loquar, cui et apud Graecos ornamenti et cultus, non sordium nomen est, etc.—I. 13.

[4] *Ibid.*, Ut Thales aquam, ut Heraclitus ignem, etc.

fowl, can say that their Maker is a sorry workman.[1]

And here we may pause to consider the respective positions of the disputants.

Neither of them was a member of the Catholic Church; for, before he wrote this treatise, Tertullian's enthusiastic temperament had led him to join the followers of Montanus, and his arguments against Marcion are sometimes in favour of the views of his sect.

The contest is not so much one of churches as of dispositions. Marcion represents the mystic, the sentimentalist, the dreamer; Tertullian the practically minded Christian. Nor is the truth all on one side. Marcion is right, when he says that perfect goodness is not displayed in power alone, and that God is to be worshipped not on account of His might, but because He is Love. In despair of finding perfect Love in Nature, or in Revelation as men understood it, Marcion made Jesus the revealer of a hitherto unknown God.

Tertullian was persuaded that his faith must

[1] Unus, opinor, de sepibus flosculus, non dico de pratis, una cuiuslibet maris conchula, non dico de Rubro, una tetraonis pennula, taceo de pavo, sordidum artificem pronuntiabit tibi Creatorem?—I. 13.

rest on a more solid foundation. His object was to discover truth by the means God seems to have appointed. The sum of his argument is this—God can only be known by His own will: if man discovers God otherwise, man must be greater than God, since he compels One, who does not wish to be known, to come into the sphere of knowledge.[1] There are two means by which God is known by nature from His works, and by instruction from His revealed announcements.[2]

The next question is the nature of God's goodness. Tertullian maintains that it must be eternal and continual—all that exists must proceed from it; and consequently it must underlie all Creation, and not merely regard it from a distance.[3] Further,

[1] Quomodo itaque revelatus est? Si per humanam coniecturam, nega Deum alias cognosci posse quam per semetipsum, nec tantum ad formam provocans Creatoris, verum et ad condicionem tam divinae magnitudinis quam humanae mediocritatis: ne maior Deo homo videri possit, qui eum non ultro volentem cognosci suis viribus quodam modo in publicum agnitionis extraxerit.—I. 18.

[2] Nos definimus Deum primo natura cognoscendum, deinde doctrina recognoscendum, natura ex operibus, doctrina ex praedicationibus.—*Ibid.*

[3] Ita et bonitas perennis et iugis exigetur in Deo, quæ in thesauris naturalium proprietatum reposita et parata antecederet causas et materias suas, et primam quamque susciperet, non despiceret et destitueret, si antecedebat.—I. 22.

it must be rational, and as such essentially righteous.[1]

Here Marcion's idea of God fails to satisfy, because mankind, whom the Unknown God comes forth to save, is not His own creation.[2] Further, the goodness of Marcion's god is not complete. He offers salvation not to mankind but to a select few. He raises the soul of man from death, but not the body.[3] Yet, says Tertullian, the body not the soul is baptized. This section, however, merely illustrates the thought of Tertullian's age; though of importance in preparing us for the fine defence of God in the second book of the treatise.

Tertullian next deals with the theory that God is nothing save benevolence. A god of this character would be incapable of exercising any influence upon human affairs.

[1] Aliam illi regulam praetendo, sicut naturalia, ita rationalia esse debere in Deo omnia.—I. 23.

[2] Quid enim iniustius, quid iniquius et improbius quam ita alieno benefacere servo, ut domino eripiatur, ut alii vindicetur, ut adversus caput domini subornetur . . . ? I.—23.

[3] Sed nolo iam de parte maiore pereuntium imperfectum bonitatis arguere deum Marcionis. Sufficit ipsos, quos salvos facit imperfectae salutis inventos imperfectam bonitatem eius ostendere, scilicet anima tenus salvos, carne deperditos, quae apud illum non resurgit. Unde haec dimidiatio salutis, nisi ex defectione bonitatis?—I. 24.

He would be a god of Epicurus: *immobilem et stupentem* are Tertullian's words.[1] But Marcion is not consistent. According to him the true God desired the salvation of men; but desire implies the existence of other passions besides those of benevolence. To wish for man's salvation is to be at enmity to all the powers which are opposed to it, and this sense of rivalry calls in all the other passions.[2]

Perhaps some here may object to Tertullian's line of argument; but I must confess that I am unable to imagine how the human mind can grasp the idea of God without indulging to a certain degree in anthropomorphism. Few indeed of us attach any very positive ideas to such terms as "the Absolute," "the Unknowable," "the

[1] Si aliquem de Epicuri schola Deum affectavit Christi nomine titulare, ut quod beatum et incorruptibile sit neque sibi neque alii molestias praestet (hanc enim sententiam ruminans Marcion removit ab illo severitates et iudiciarias vires), aut in totum immobilem et stupentem deum concepisse debuerat (et quid illi cum Christo, molesto et Judaeis per doctrinam et sibi per sensum?)—I. 25.

[2] Deinque volens et concupiscens et curans hominem liberare hoc ipso iam aemulatur et eum a quo liberat, adversus eum scilicet sibi liberaturus, et ea de quibus liberat, in alia liberaturus. Proinde enim aemulationi occurrant necesse est officiales suae in ea quae aemulatur, ira, discordia, odium. . . .—I. 25.

Great First Cause," or even to such familiar words as "the Almighty," "the Everlasting." But when St John tells us that Jesus revealed God as Love, we have some idea of his meaning. We know what the human quality of love is, and we apply it even to the Divine essence. The fact that God loves us evokes a love for Him in our hearts. We feel that if He loves mankind, He must desire its welfare, He must oppose all that keeps it from Him, He must be the enemy of all sin which mars His Creation. For love is never a passive quality. It is not amiability, a term rarely used without contempt. On the contrary, it implies an exercise of the will; and, though it is very hard to connect the ideas of desire, will, purpose, and the like, with Omnipotence, it is scarcely possible to think of a personal God without it: and worship, without some personal object of adoration, to me at least, is barely conceivable.[1]

Marcion asserted in support of his view of God, "He who is evil will be feared, and he who is good will be loved."[2] After disposing

[1] See Note 9 at end.

[2] Malus autem, inquiunt, timebitur; bonus autem diligetur. —I. 26.

of the fallacy of this aphorism, Tertullian proceeds to vindicate the Scriptural account of God's dealings with mankind.

Tertullian begins his second book by re-asserting that God was known from the beginning, scouting as heretical the idea that man was at any time debarred from learning about Him. He maintains that the revelation of God was a Self-revelation, and that God could never be known save in so far as He willed to reveal Himself.[1]

Tertullian naturally assumes that the opening chapters of Genesis, on which he bases much of his argument, are historically true. Perhaps some here are not on this point in agreement with him. But may we not allow that moral truths are revealed in the (possibly) allegorical accounts of the Creation and the Fall? If you are prepared to grant that Man, as he is known to us, (how he came into being — whether by evolution or by a sudden act of creation is here immaterial)—possessed certain rudimen-

[1] "Ideo tantum opinor, quia a primordio notus est, quia nunquam latuit, quia semper illuxit, etiam ante Romulum ipsum, nedum ante Tiberium: nisi quod solis haereticis cognitus non est, qui ei negotium faciunt," etc., and further on, "Quem non scias nisi ex parte qua voluit ipse."—II. 2.

tary notions of right and wrong, the idea of a Fall cannot be dismissed as inconceivable.

Now, according to the account of the Fall, which the majority of critics have pronounced to be the most ancient, primitive man was no half-Divine representative of his posterity, but a creature of limited power fitted only for a law consisting in a single prohibition.

Human history seems to confirm the view that, if the world is the work of a good and beneficent Creator, man must have swerved from the path designed for him, and must, so to speak, have developed upon wrong lines. It is scarcely necessary to arrive at any decision as to how this took place to appreciate the force of Tertullian's argument.

The whole of Creation, as described in Genesis i., was to Tertullian a manifestation of Divine goodness. He thinks of the world as the expression of the mind of God, and the means whereby He makes Himself to be known. But Tertullian does not regard the Creation as something sudden and adventitious, but as always existing in the mind of God before time came into

being.[1] The crown of Divine love manifested in the world was the creation of man. This was affected not by an imperious decree, but with gentle and kindly words, "Let us make man in our own image."[2] For man was destined for something greater even than the Universe. He was placed in the world in order to be fitted for a grander sphere. He was given the honourable distinction of being the only created thing to receive a law from God.[3] Nor did the command stand by itself: a solemn warning was added in loving mercy (benignissime).

Marcion's objection to this is worth stating: "How did God allow mankind to be cheated by the devil into disobeying His law and falling into the power of death, if He is good, and knows the future, and can avert evil? Especially as man has been

[1] Prima denique bonitas Creatoris, qua se Deus noluit in aeternum latere, id est, non esse aliquid cui Deus cognosceretur. Quid enim tam bonum quam notitia et fructus Dei? Nam etsi nondum apparebat hoc bonum esse, quia nondum erat quidquam cui appareret, sed Deus praesciebat quid boni appariturum esset.—II. 3.

[2] Non imperiali verbo, sed familiari manu, etiam verbo blandiente praemisso, "Faciamus hominem, etc."—II. 4.

[3] Ut solus homo gloriaretur, quod solus dignus fuisset qui legem a Deo sumeret.—II. 4.

made in God's image, nay, of His substance also, by the origin of his soul. If God had been good He would not have wished such a thing to happen; if He had prescient, He would have foreseen it; if He were powerful, He would have averted it. So that, under such conditions the Fall could never have happened, had the God of the Old Testament been Almighty. The fact that it occurred proved the Creator to be neither good, prescient nor powerful. Thus it is plain that He is not the true God."[1]

In replying to this Tertullian says that the principal likeness of man to God lies in the fact that he possesses free will. No law can be imposed upon any one who is not a free agent; nor could punishment be rightly inflicted, unless it had been in the power

[1] Si Deus bonus et praescius futuri, et avertendi mali potens, cur hominem, et quidem imaginem et similitudinem suam, immo et substantiam suam, per animae scilicet censum, passus est labi de obsequio legis, circumventum a diabolo? Si enim et bonus, qui evenire tale quid nollet, et praescius, qui eventurum non ignoraret, et potens, qui depellere valeret, nullo modo evenisset quod sub his tribus conditionibus divinae maiestatis evenire non posset. Quod si evenit, absolutum est e contrario Deum neque bonum credendum neque praescium neque potentem.—II. 5.

of the culprit to refrain from the evil act, which deserved the penalty. Such freedom of will is implied in God's words in Deuteronomy: "Behold I set before you life and death, good and evil."[1]

In answer to the objection that man ought not to have received the boon of free will, if by it harm would come to him, Tertullian demonstrates that freedom is necessary to morality. All goodness must have a definite purpose, a purposeless goodness being inconceivable. It was in accordance with the goodness of God that He should be known, and that there should be a created being, like man, worthy of knowing Him. It was, however, necessary that man should have free will, in order that any good which God might give him might be his own to use or abuse according to his choice. For that which a man

[1] Neque enim facie et corporalibus lineis tam variis in genere humano, ad uniformem Deum expressus est, sed in ea substantia, quam ab ipso Deo traxit, id est animae ad formam Dei respondentis, et arbitrii sui libertate et potestate signatus est. . . . Sic et in posteris legibus Creatoris invenias proponentis ante hominem bonum et malum, vitam et mortem (Deut. xxx. 19.), sed nec alias totum ordinem disciplinae per praecepta dispositum, avocante Deo et minante et exhortante, nisi et ad obsequium et ad contemptum libero et voluntario homine.—II. 5.

is not free to use is in no sense his property.[1]

By preventing the Fall, due to the wrongful exercise of the choice between good and evil, God would have shown inconsistency in withdrawing the freedom he had bestowed upon His creature. This would have been unworthy of Him; and Marcion would have been the first to exclaim against such instability of purpose. Man fell because he abused God's greatest gift, and thus the blame for the Fall cannot be laid upon the Creator.

I have dwelt at some length on this portion of Tertullian's argument, because of my belief that it is still of importance to us. You may perhaps be inclined to criticise Tertullian's manner of presenting the argument. His tone may appear too positive: you may say that matters are regarded too much from a legal stand-

[1] Oportebat Deum cognosci: bonum hoc utique et rationale. Oportebat dignum aliquid esse, quod Deum cognosceret; quid tam dignum prospici posset, quam imago dei et similitudo? Et hoc bonum sine dubio et rationale Oportebat igitur imaginem et similitudinem Dei liberi arbitrii et suae potestatis institui, in qua hoc ipsum, imago et similitudo Dei deputaretur, arbitrii scilicet libertas et potestas.—II. 6.

point. But when due allowance has been given to these considerations, there remains a great deal worthy of your careful attention.

The question of sin and human responsibility must ever be an essential problem for a Christian. It is one which can hardly be solved, if we not only pronounce the history of the Fall to be mythical, but also divest it of all moral significance. This recent criticism has not really effected. The second chapter of Genesis probably (for on such a subject it is not possible to speak with certainty) belongs to the ninth century before Christ. Even then the story of the Fall was no novelty, and discoveries in Assyria and Babylonia seem to warrant a belief that, in some form or other, it is older by many centuries than the Hebrew nation. At any rate, the belief that man's perversity has caused him to lose happiness is widespread. The history of the Hebrews shows how deeply the need of pardon and restoration was felt by that extraordinary people. Their laws and ceremonies, in common with those of many other peoples, indicate a constant sense of need for purification. In fact the religious system of Israel,

which culminated in Judaism, is based on the desire to recover the forfeited favour of Jehovah,[1] and brightened by a hope of restoration.

The trend of modern ideas is assuredly not in this direction; but the neglect of the Scriptural view of man's depravity, and the possibility of God's raising him out of the state into which he has fallen, is no new thing. The present fashion of laying great stress on the Doctrine of the Incarnation, and passing lightly over that of the Atonement; in believing that the instruction, which mankind receives from the presence of the Logos, is more important to Salvation than the removal of sin, is not a novelty, but an integral factor in every Gnostic system of the second century after Christ.

One of the greatest objections to the Christian teaching respecting sin is that, according to some, no man is considered to be really responsible for his actions. The Gnostics maintained that this was the case because we live in a material world, and our spirits are weighed down by our bodies of sinful flesh. The Marcionites refined upon this by

[1] See Note 10 at end.

their assertion that the God of this world, as revealed in the Old Testament, was narrow in His judgments, and unreasonable in His demands. The enlightenment brought by Christ would enable those, who were able to receive it, to free themselves from the encumbrance of sin.

According to modern ideas, the grounds for questioning the doctrine of moral responsibility are different, but the result is the same. Suppose that "matter," instead of being pronounced inherently evil, is accepted as an eternal and uncreated thing without which no existence is possible; suppose man to be nothing more than a highly complex organism, his life the result of chemical action upon the innumerable cells of which his body is composed—and nothing more; suppose all his perceptions to be physical, his conscience merely the result of natural instinct highly specialised during countless generations of development.[1] Does it not follow that man's actions are the result rather of circumstances than of his will? and that humanity is, as the Gnostics said, able to be divided into different

[1] See Note 11 at end.

classes, each of which is spiritually, as well as intellectually, capable of no more than the conditions, in which they are born, allow. In such a case, can any view of man's moral responsibility be seriously maintained? Can God be said to be reasonably offended by man's actions? Is there such a thing as sin, or do we mean by this word no more than a refusal on the part of some men to adapt their natural instincts to the development of the society in which they are placed? Is there any room for the idea of an atonement, if we believe that all evil will eventually be removed by the progress of humanity and increasing knowledge? Such, after all, was actually the meaning of the message which the ideal Christ of Gnosticism was intended to deliver.

I may remind you that Tertullian cannot have been entirely ignorant of materialistic philosophy. At least he had read Lucretius, probably before he had so much as heard of the book of Genesis. For he says in his "Testimony of the Soul" that he did not study the Scriptures till after his conversion. As a trained lawyer, however, he must have come to the conclusion that the story of the

Fall gave a reasonable idea of Divine justice, before he accepted it.

The rest of the second book against Marcion, which will occupy our attention, is devoted to an examination of the objections which Marcion made in the "Antithesis" to the Old Testament conception of God. These, and Tertullian's replies to them, show the character of early Christian criticism of the Bible. Both disputants display much insight and originality, and it is remarkable to notice how ancient some of the arguments against the morality of the Old Testament really are. It is with reluctance that I pass over Tertullian's discussion of the nature of the Tempter, and his identification of him with the Prince of Tyre spoken of in Ezekiel.[1]

As a proof that the God of the Old Testament was the author of evil, the Marcionites quoted the words of Isaiah: "Ego sum qui condo mala." Tertullian very properly distinguishes between *evil* and *sin*. In the latter sense evil is not the work of God. This sort of evil is classified under the head of "mala culpae,"

[1] Bk. II. 10, Ezek. xxviii.

and must not be confounded with "mala poenae," or evils inflicted for sin.[1] These, being just, proceed from God, and are worthy of Him. Such was the hardening of Pharoah's heart, to which apparently objections had been raised. Tertullian points out that Pharaoh was guilty, before God allowed him to be seduced to his destruction; and that even Israel was punished as Pharaoh had been, when they merited his fate.[2]

In answer to the objection that the God of Scripture is inconsistent in declaring in one place that He will visit the sins of the fathers upon their children, whilst in Ezekiel He says, "The father shall not bear the iniquity of the son, nor the son the iniquity of the father," Tertullian shows that the second

[1] Isa. xlv. 7. Amplexi enim vocabuli communionem duas malorum species in ambiguitate turbantem, quia mala dicuntur et delicta et supplicia, passim volunt eum conditorem intelligi malorum, ut malitiae auctor renunietur. —II. 14.

[2] Indurat cor Pharaonis: sed meruerat in exitium subministrari, qui iam negaverat Deum, qui iam legatos eius toties superbus excusserat, qui iam populo laborem operis adiecerat, postremo qua Ægyptius, olim Deo reus fuerat gentilis idololatriae, Ibin et crocodilem citius colens, quam Deum vivum. Impendit et ipsum populum, sed ingratum. Immisi et pueris ursos, sed irreverentibus in Prophetam.—II. 14.

commandment was not inherently unjust, because if a child shares in his father's blessings he must expect to suffer for his sins. It was, moreover, beneficial, because Israel required a strong deterrent, and nothing can act so powerfully to restrain a man as the thought that his sin will bear fruit among his innocent children. But Tertullian, aware that there is spiritual progress in the revelation in the Old Testament, shows that by the time of Ezekiel a great advance had been made; in accordance with which responsibility was put upon the individual rather than upon the family.

That human passions are attributed to God in the Old Testament is naturally a cause of perplexity. I confess it is not easy to follow Tertullian in his answer to this objection, and I indicate the course of his argument with hesitation.

He admits that passions must be ascribed to God, because the prophets and Apostles have revealed Him, not as a God of Epicurus far removed from the world, but as One who actively cares for mankind. He must therefore be described as having emotions, but these are no more comparable to the feelings

of men than are the "right hand of the Lord," "His eyes," His feet," to those members of our bodies.

The Marcionites allow that the Creator of the world is God, and yet that He has human passions. In this they are illogical, since they ought to derive human passions from Him, and not attribute them to Him. The God who "breathed into man's nostrils the breath of life" is not subject to human feelings, but man derives these from God.

I should presume too much on your patience were I to dwell longer on Tertullian's methods of exegesis, and with reluctance I must be content with calling your attention to the brilliant conclusion of the second book, in which he shows admirable dialectical skill in turning the argument of Marcion's "Antithesis" into a proof that the God of the Old Testament and He whom Christ revealed are One and the Same.

May I here express my opinion that it will be a bad day for Biblical study, when the ancient fathers are neglected as interpreters of the Scriptures? From time to time this is the case, but the cause of learning is generally the loser. Not only is it

important for the historian to understand the mental process by which some of the acutest minds in the Roman Empire were drawn to accept the Gospel: it is equally necessary for the theologian to form an estimate of the influence of the Old Testament upon Christian thought.

It is true that the early fathers indulge in an exegesis, which we can seldom adopt, that their conclusions are drawn from certain passages, totally foreign to the obvious meaning of the sacred writer. Such, for example, is the famous explanation of the opening words of the Psalm, "Eructavit cor meum sermonem bonum," which Tertullian and many after him refer to the Procession of Christ, the Word, from the Father. But after taking these things into account, we need not forget, in our desire to learn the last pronouncement of modern critics, that no advances in Biblical science can render obsolete the acute and sagacious remarks of a man of such genius and spiritual experience as Tertullian. In his days, and before him, many a modern difficulty concerning the Scriptures was both felt and discussed; and the opinions of Tertullian are the more interesting because

of his position as a champion of the Church outside her pale.

The crisis at which Marcion propagated his peculiar views was favourable to their acceptance. The Jewish nation had fallen for the second and last time before the power of Rome. The suppression of Barcochab's revolt was more fatal to Judaism than the destruction of the Temple by Titus. Terrible as the first blow had been, the Jewish nation recovered itself with astonishing rapidity. The victory of Hadrian was more complete. Jerusalem was destroyed and rebuilt as a heathen town. Its very name was changed to Aelia Capitolina. A temple in honour of Zeus stood on the site of the temples of Solomon, Zerubbabel, and Herod. The Jews were forbidden to approach the city. The Jewish Christian Church disappeared, and a Gentile named Marcus presided over the Gentile Christian community of Aelia.[1] Thus the last link between the Catholic Church and Judaism was broken. The old "apostolic succession" of bishops of Jerusalem representing those who had known Christ after the flesh was no more.

[1] Euseb. *H.E.* iv. 6.

At such a crisis it seemed almost natural that the growing Gentile churches should accept the invitation to sever themselves from all that savoured of Judaism. To do so, the Marcionites must have urged, was only to carry out Pauline principles to their logical conclusions. Nor were the advantages attending such a course to be despised. The Judaism of the Old Testament still weighed upon the Church. The representation of God found there proved a greater obstacle to would-be believers than had the ancient rite of circumcision in the apostolic age. Boldly to reject the Old Testament was in accordance with the enlightened and liberal spirit of the time. Marcion had moreover done everything to make this rejection easy. Without denying that the Creator was God, or that His acts were righteous, he maintained that He was not perfect. The revelation of God in the Old Testament had done its work: a truer Divinity was now revealed in Christ. Surely therefore the time had come for the Church to free herself from the past, and to advance in the fuller light of the present!

This tempting proposal our forefathers in the Faith had the wisdom to decline. They refused to give up the Old Testament. They would acknowledge no dislocation in the revelation of God to man; but held to the belief that Christ naturally and legitimately fulfilled the ancient covenant. The books of Old and New Testament were acknowledged to form links in the unbroken chain of revelation which from the first God had made to mankind.

Tertullian's name is so constantly connected in our minds with intolerance, narrowness and contempt of philosophy, that we need constantly to be reminded that he held firmly the notion of a universal revelation. Such sayings as "O testimonium animae naturaliter Christianae," and "Ante anima quam prophetia," prove that he believed that the memory of an original revelation of God still dwelt in the hearts of all men.

It is frequently assumed that the main result of criticism is not, as is actually the case, the theory that the books of the Old Testament are in many instances composed of different materials varying in date and

style, but that all abnormal elements have been eliminated from the history of Israel. I confess myself unable to see how anyone, after studying the subject, can fail to accept the conclusion that the editors who reduced the Old Testament to its present form made use of documents belonging to different ages. At the same time we may not overlook the fact that, however probable such a view may be, it cannot be a certainty. The ultimate basis of all views about the origin of the literature of the Hebrews is conjecture; and all are aware that in the case of historical study the most plausible hypotheses may be shattered in a moment by some fortunate discovery, which sets the question at rest for ever. Bearing this in mind, I should indeed be sorry to abandon what the Universal Church has taught for the sake of any theory, till it was absolutely and finally proved to be the truth.

The real question therefore is whether our attitude towards the Old Testament is modified by the actual results of criticism, or by theories suggested by them? The point at issue is not the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, nor the unity of the sixty-six

chapters of the book of Isaiah, but whether the history of God's Chosen People is or is not a record of how the True God revealed Himself to Israel for the sake of all humanity. Starting with the assumptions that the Old Testament, as we now have it, is of relatively recent date, and that the science of comparative religion shows the Hebrews to have shared in many ideas common to other nations, the modern theory of the Old Testament is briefly as follows :—

The Israelites adopted the worship of a deity named Jahveh, the tribal god of their kinsfolk, the Midianites. Though this god differed but little from other deities, yet Israel, guided by teachers with an exceptional genius for religion, evolved a theory of the nature of the Divinity higher than that of any other nation. The Old Testament contains an account of this progress towards religious truth seen mainly from the standpoint of a later age.[1]

Such ideas were possibly more familiar to Tertullian than is generally supposed. It has not, for instance, escaped his acute mind that a book like Deuteronomy shows a

[1] See Note 12 at end.

conception of man's duty to God in a more advanced age than that to which the precepts of Exodus xx.-xxii. belong. The study of comparative religion was necessary to Christian scholars in the second century. The opportunities for pursuing it were constantly present. Tertullian could not but be aware that Israel had been allowed to do much of their service to God in a manner resembling the worship of the Gentiles, but he sees in this only a clearer proof of God's condescension to man's infirmity.[1]

The idea that all true religion is progressive is constantly in the mind of Tertullian. To him it supplies the clue to all the difficulties of the Old Testament. It is only to be regretted that in dealing with these so few modern theologians possess the sound common sense and the understanding of the principles of logic displayed by the African father.

We seem hardly conscious of the greatness

[1] In Book II. 18, Tertullian declares that sacrifices were ordained because the Israelites were so like the heathen that God did not see fit at once to forbid sacrificial worship, but contented Himself with allowing Israel only to offer to Him. "Sibi iubens fieri, quasi desideranti ne simulacris faciendis delinqueret."

of the debt due from us to Israel, when we speak with a light heart of giving up the Old Testament; and it would be well if Tertullian's observations on the beauty of the teaching of the Law and the Prophets were better appreciated. In this he is but following the method employed by our Lord, who based His teaching upon the morality inculcated in the Old Testament, and took from it the immortal summary of all true religion, "Hear, O Israel," etc.

Easy as it is to criticise parts of the moral teaching of the Old Testament, it is no light task to live in conformity with the practical piety it inculcates. It is still to the ancient Scriptures that we must look for examples of pure and wholesome domestic life, of upright dealing, of wise thrift, of consideration towards dependents, of kindness to animals, of liberality to the poor. The higher virtues of the New Testament must ever be based on the sober piety of the Old, for it is not by neglecting, but by exceeding the righteous of the Scribes that the followers of the Christ enter into His kingdom. Nor can Christians dispense with the religious teaching of the Old Testament.

To speak plainly, I believe its merit lies in its extreme simplicity. The ancient Israelites never philosophised about God's nature, nor speculated concerning His essence. They were content to employ the commonest words to speak of His dealings. They knew He transcended all things; and yet they spoke of Him as coming down "to see the city and the tower which the sons of men had builded." They knew that the offering of bulls and goats could not win His favour; yet they spoke of his "smelling the burnt offering" and accepting it. They knew that no man could see His face and live; yet God is related "to have spoken face to face with Moses, as a man speaketh to a friend." The patriarchs not only prayed to Him, but spoke and argued with Him, yes, and even changed His purpose. And this is one reason why Israel understood God so well.

We are familiar with the history of the progress of more spiritual ideas in Israel. In the Septuagint, in Philo and in the Targums we trace the process by which the materialistic conceptions of the nature of Jehovah were eliminated, and He was regarded with ever-increasing reverence as far removed

from this world. But I often wonder if religion gained thereby! The simple fervour of the Psalms displays perhaps truer notions of God's relations to man, than Philo's presentation of Him as an abstract Deity revealed by the Logos. We find no transcendentalism in the words of Christ. True is it that he insists that "God is Spirit;" but he brings Him very near to the hearts of all by teaching that we may still call Him "Our Father."

Theology has been described as the crown of all the sciences. And this is true, for what branch of human knowledge does not minister to it? Nothing, which man can learn, can fail to be concerned with the search after God, "in Whom are all the treasures of Wisdom." If heaven and earth are manifestations of God's glory, what department of the study of Nature can be outside the scope of Theology? How can the study of man fail to bear upon that which seeks to discover the attributes of his Maker? The constitution of his body, the operation of his vital functions, the working of his mind must all be studied by the theologian. The most rudimentary discussion of a religious question may

confront us with the deepest of Nature's problems.

To master a short treatise of a writer like Tertullian it would be necessary to be familiar with many vast fields of study. His language, vigorous, though obscure, requires an experienced scholar to interpret it. His treatment of Scripture, the state of the Latin version in his day, requires the continuous labour of an expert. There is room for the lawyer, the anthropologist, the philosopher (Tertullian's contempt for philosophy notwithstanding) to interpret his works. But enough has been said to show how great is the equipment necessary to thoroughly elucidate a single writer on this subject. But if theology is a science full of inexhaustible problems, religion is a simpler matter. Admit that God is more than human knowledge can grasp, yet to approach Him we must think of Him in plain and simple terms. It is as to a Father, to a Teacher, to One who is tender, merciful, and compassionate that man draws near to God. It is as One who cares for us as His children, who bears with our weakness, who seeks our confidence, that we learn to know God. And herein perhaps He

is greatest; for it is not as Omnipotence or Omniscience that Jesus Christ reveals the Father, but as Love. And to have access to Him we must lay aside our poor pride of human knowledge and come as children to His feet. For Christ has said that it is only when a man is able to become as a little child that he is meet to enter into the Kingdom of God.

LECTURE III.

MARCION'S GOSPEL.

"Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and to-day, yea, and for ever."—HEBREWS xiii. 8.

THE fourth book of Tertullian's treatise against Marcion is practically a commentary upon the Gospel according to St Luke; its interest being heightened by the fact that it is the earliest attempt to explain a book of the New Testament from the standpoint of traditional Christianity. True, it does not lack indications of the hold which Montanist opinions had upon the writer's mind; but, for the most part, it has every appearance of reflecting the opinions of the Church of his age.

It would be impossible within the limits of a single lecture to give a detailed account of such a treatise; and as a summary would be dry and tedious, I must content myself

with a discussion of the passages most germane to the subject before us. I need hardly do more than explain that Tertullian's object is to take Marcion's revised edition of the Lucan Gospel, and to show that, even if only the residuum allowed by him of the Gospel story can be accepted as genuine, it can nevertheless be demonstrated that the Christ foreshadowed in the Old Testament and He, whom the Evangelist describes, are the same.

In this, I venture to think, lies the special importance of this part of the treatise. It deals with one of the most pressing religious difficulties of our age. Marcion was as conscious as we now are of the difference in spirit between the Old and the New Testament. He found it impossible to reconcile the teaching of our Lord with that of the Law and the Prophets. The attempt to perform this hopeless task was in his eyes the cause of all the errors concerning the work and Person of Jesus. To maintain that in Him all the prophecies concerning the Messiah of the Old Testament were fulfilled; to say that He proclaimed the will of Jehovah, seemed to be misrepresenting Him

altogether. What Jesus Christ did, according to Marcion, was to reveal to mankind the true Father of all, whom Israel had not known. Unless it be realised that the God of whom our Lord speaks is not Jehovah the God of Israel, the inconsistency between the Old and the New Testament is to him inexplicable. The writers of the greater part of the New Testament were blind to this important fact. They assumed that Jesus was the Messiah of prophecy, and in consequence misapprehended the whole tenor of His message to the world. In their endeavour to adapt all prophecy to the acts and words of Christ, and to make Him satisfy the demands of the Old Covenant, the Gospel story had been completely distorted. Nor could the real Christ be restored till the Judaic element had been expunged from the New Testament, and the clearer conception of His nature as apprehended by St Paul brought into relief once more. The result of these imaginings is Marcion's expurgated edition of the Gospel according to St Luke.

May I call your attention to the singularly modern tone pervading the whole of Marcion's conception of the Gospel story? He feels,

as many are now inclined to do, that the God of the Old Testament, as Creator of the visible Universe, is different from Him whom Christ revealed as "the Father"; just as the Christ foretold in the ancient Scriptures is unlike Jesus in almost every respect. Neither Jehovah, the God of Israel, nor His Messiah, an earthly conqueror, the restorer of Israel's ancient glories, satisfied the demands of his conscience.[1] To Marcion Jesus Christ represented a God of love and mercy, not a mere embodiment of abstract justice untempered by mercy, such as he conceived the God of the Jews to have been. It is a sign of his deep spiritual insight that he could not remain satisfied with a Christ, who was no more than a literal fulfiller of prophecy; that he recognised the greatness of our Lord as the perfection of all goodness, the One who is alone capable of ministering to all the needs of humanity.

In this respect at least Marcion foreshadows that characteristic of modern thought which would see in Jesus far more than conventional orthodoxy is capable of recognising, although it deprives Him of that connection with the

[1] Irenaeus, *Haer.* I. xxv. 1.

whole past of human history so particularly assigned to Him by the Creed of the Church.

Deeply as we may lament some of the teaching of our day on the subject of our Lord's ministry on earth, it is but just to acknowledge that much precious truth can still be extracted from what appears to many of us to be most grievous error. In the modern attempts to rationalise the story of our Lord's work on earth certain features of His character have been rendered more prominent, and have appealed to the conscience of man with greater force than some of those aspects of the Gospel on which the orthodoxy of our predecessors was wont to dwell.[1] I believe that part of that which is so satisfying to the hearts of men now was actually embodied in Marcion's appeal to his own age. At the same time, however, I cannot withhold my opinion that the manner in which it was presented was erroneous, and, had the Church accepted Marcion's doctrine in its entirety, Christianity would have been in the end eliminated.

Primitive Christianity has a special lesson for our age; it teaches us by its virtues, and

[1] See Note 13 at end.

warns us by its shortcomings. Much can be learned in religious matters even from the speculative errors of the past, if only we will fully recognise that no opinions can gain influence without possessing at least a substratum of truth. In dealing with modern errors, however, I venture to suggest that we fall into the opposite mistake of thinking that, because a theory is in part true, it may be accepted without due caution, and without an attempt to formulate the conclusions to which it will ultimately tend.

With so much by way of preface, let us commence a brief study of Tertullian's examination of the Lucan Gospel "according to Marcion."

Tertullian and Marcion were so far in agreement that they both realised the complete newness of Christ's dispensation. Tertullian's Montanism made him more fully aware of this than he would perhaps have been had he remained in full communion with the Church, conceiving, as he did, that he lived under the dispensation of the Holy Ghost. He was not, however, blind to the fact that the Church cannot break with the

past, and he states his case in the following terms:—

"I acknowledge that one order of things has run its course in the old Dispensation under the Creator, and that another has commenced in the new Dispensation under Christ. I do not deny that there is a difference between the old and the new in the evidences of the Divine utterance, in morality and in the discipline prescribed by the Law. Yet all this diversity is consistent with one and the same Lord; even Him by whom all are agreed that it was ordered even as also it was foretold."[1]

Here we have the very keynote of the treatise; and Tertullian a little further on throws light on his principle of dealing with the evidence of Scripture.

Marcion has selected St Luke's Gospel as being the true one, and Tertullian remarks that, as it was admittedly later than St Paul,[2]

[1] Atque adeo confiteor alium ordinem decucurrisse in veteri dispositione apud Creatorem, alium in nova apud Christum. Non nego distare documenta eloquii, praecepta virtutis, legis disciplinas; dum tamen tota diversitas in unum et eundem Deum competat: illum scilicet a quo constat eam dispositam, sicut et praedicatam.—IV. ch. i.

[2] Lucas non Apostolus sed Apostolicus; non magister sed discipulus.—IV. 2.

it must necessarily be based on the Gospel which the Apostle had preached.[1] But St Paul's Gospel must itself have had some foundation. This was acknowledged to have been the teaching of the Apostles of Christ, with which St Paul was so anxious that his own preaching should tally that he went up to Jerusalem for the express purpose of ascertaining whether his teaching was in agreement with theirs. Under these circumstances Marcion's Gospel is ultimately to be derived from the teaching of the Twelve.[2]

Tertullian here makes his appeal to the unbroken tradition of the Church concerning the four Gospels.[3] It is like the appeal made by Irenaeus, and, considering the time at which it was made, it has, to my mind

[1] Gal. ii. 14. "Adv. Marc." iv. 2, 3.

[2] In summa si constat id verius quod prius, id prius quod et ab initio, id ab initio quod ab Apostolis; pariter utique constabit, id esse ab Apostolis traditum, quod apud Ecclesias Apostolorum fuerit sacrosanctum.—IV. 5.

[3] Further on Tertullian says in the same chapter: Eadem auctoritas Ecclesiarum Apostolicarum caeteris quoque patrocinabitur Evangeliis, quae proinde per illas et secundum illas habemus, Ioannis dico et Matthaei; licet et Marcus quod edidit, Petri affirmetur, cuius interpres Marcus: nam et Lucae digestum Paulo ascribere solent. See also "Irenaeus," iii. 1.

at least, very great weight. It is a simple fact that the acceptance of the chief books of the canon of the New Testament was settled by no authoritative council, but was the result of the consensus of the small local churches scattered throughout the Roman Empire, the most part of which looked for guidance to some neighbouring church claiming to have been founded by an Apostle or Apostolic man. The tradition with regard to the gospels, at any rate, had become uniform by the time of Irenaeus, a man who was brought up in Proconsular Asia, lectured on heresiology at Rome, and in old age was a bishop in Gaul. He had carried the Christian tradition, which he had learned in the East from Polycarp, the disciple of St John, to Western Europe, and at the close of the second century was a witness to the unbroken tradition of the Apostolic Church.

Considering how few facts are known concerning the Church of the second century, and how explicit the tradition at the conclusion of that period is, it seems rash to allow it to be discredited by accepting mere theories, however plausible these may be,

and, I may add, however great the names by which they are supported.

The Marcionite Gospel, as you no doubt are aware, began with the words, "In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Jesus came down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee."[1] Tertullian at once joins issue with Marcion.[2] Jesus came, it is said, suddenly as the Christ of a rival God. If so, how did He come? How did He manage to pass through the realms of a hostile Creator? What a curious coincidence was it that Isaiah should have declared that the Creator's Christ would appear in Galilee?[3] It was equally strange that a synagogue should have been chosen by One who, unlike the Creator's Christ, was not sent to the House of Israel. Further, how came

[1] Anno quintodecimo principatus Tiberiani proponit eum descendisse in civitatem Galilaeae, Capharnaum.—IV. 7.

[2] Et tamen quomodo in synagogam potuit admitti tam repentinus, tam ignotus, cuius nemo adhuc certus de tribu, de populo, de domo, de censu denique Augusti, quem testem fidelissimum dominicae nativitatis Romana archiva custodiunt?—IV. 7.

[3] Isa. ix. 1-2; lxx. Hoc primum bibito, cito facito, regio Zabulon, et terra Nephthalim, et caeteri qui maritimam et Iordanis, Galilaea nationum, populus qui sedetis in tenebris, videte lumen magnum: qui habitatis terram, sedentes in umbra mortis lumen ortum est super vos.

the Jews to admit a stranger like Marcion's Christ into their synagogue, when there was no evidence that He was of their race or religion? Finally, what meant the exclamation of the man possessed by an evil spirit that Jesus was the "Holy One of God," if He was not recognised as the Christ of Prophecy?

But as above all things we must avoid discursiveness, the subject of to-day's lecture must necessarily be circumscribed, and we must confine ourselves to Tertullian's discussion of those verses in St Luke vi. which correspond to St Matthew's longer version called the "Sermon on the Mount."

I select this passage not only because of its great importance, but on account of the prevalent notion that nothing in the teaching of Christ is of much interest to us outside this initial discourse.[1] We frequently are told that the kernel of Christianity is to be found in the Sermon on the Mount in such a manner as to imply that nothing else, even concerning Jesus Christ, need

[1] "The Sermon on the Mount" is not an outlying portion of the Gospel, but its sum.—Dr Hatch, *Hibbert Lectures*, 1888, p. 351, quoted in Dr Gore's *Bampton Lectures*, p. 21.

trouble us. Tertullian's argument tends to show that a right apprehension of our Lord's Person is necessary to understand the meaning of His teaching even on the elementary subjects of morals and duty, and in this way to demonstrate that to grasp the significance of the Sermon on the Mount we must recognise the rest of His doctrine concerning Himself.

Tertullian aptly terms the Sermon the "edictum Christi." It was, I may perhaps remind you, customary for the praetor upon entering into office to declare the character of the law he proposed to administer. The *edicta praetorum* formed a part of the Roman law, and Tertullian is thinking of them when he applies the term to our Lord's discourse.[1]

Tertullian remarks that the first words of our Lord are words of blessing. This very fact is a mark of the Creator, for He also blessed all things as he made them. Again, those said to be blessed are the poor, (mendici, as Tertullian is careful to point

[1] Venio nunc ad ordinarias sententias eius, per quas proprietatem doctrinae suae inducit ad edictum (ut ita dixerim) Christi.—IV. 14. Maine's "Ancient Law." Ch. ii.

out as the right rendering for πτωχοί), another mark of the Creator![1] So many passages in the Old Testament enjoin the duty of caring for the poor that, says Tertullian, one might as well choose apples in an orchard as make any special selection. But, say the Marcionites, the promises to the poor in the Old Testament are material, whilst those made by Christ are spiritual. Yet the blessing on "those that hunger now" is that "they shall be filled." The earthly blessings which the Creator bestows are an earnest of His power. Again Tertullian repeats his statement that Marcion's God has given no proof of His ability to bless.[2] The fact is that these beatitudes are a practical republication of the Old Testament: not one of them has not its parallel there—Christ has only "renewed" them.

[1] "Beati mendici" (sic enim exigit interpretatio vocabuli quod in Graeco est), "quoniam illorum est regnum dei." Iam hoc ipsum quod a benedictionibus coepit, Creatoris est, qui universa, prout edidit, nulla alia voce quam benedictionibus dedicavit. "Eructavit enim," inquit "cor meum sermonem optimum." Hic erit sermo optimus, benedictionis scilicet, qui et novi quoque Testamenti initiator agnoscitur de veteri exemplo.—IV. 14.

[2] Bene quod Creator vel minora promisit, ut facilius illi et de maioribus credam, quam qui nunquam de minoribus prius fidem liberalitatis suae struxit.—*Ibid.*

Marcion did not delete the "Woes" pronounced by our Lord after the "Benedictions," and caused his followers much perplexity thereby. They were only able to account for the presence of maledictions in our Lord's discourse by declaring that He did not utter them as emanating from Himself, but in order to show the ferocity of the justice dispensed by the Creator, and thereby enhance His own goodness in the Blessings. But Tertullian shows by a reference to the Creator's words in Deuteronomy, "Behold I have set before you blessing and cursing," that our Lord was only following the precedent set in the Old Testament, when he prefaced his discourse by Blessings and Woes.

The fact that Jesus came as the Christ of One who sent Him to destroy the Old Covenant, as Marcion maintained, as well as the declaration of "Woes" against sinners, is a proof that He was no Being, who knew not how to be angry. In bitter irony Tertullian suggests that Christ may have forgotten the pure benevolence of the mission with which He had been entrusted, and that as His character had been modified

by contact with the Creator, He had ceased to be a passionless "God of Epicurus."

In discussing the "Woe" pronounced on the rich Tertullian shows that it is the temper of mind induced too often by the possession of wealth that is condemned, and not the actual wealth itself: "For those who have wealth," he remarks, "may be assisted by it, and many works of love and justice are accomplished thereby."

Tertullian next deals with the precept, "Love your enemies, bless those that hate you, and pray for those who speak evil of you." Here the question arises whether our Lord's command is consonant with the *Lex talionis*, "An eye for an eye," etc., or with the Divine assurance, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord."

Marcion declared that our Lord taught a new morality, when He substituted for the Law "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth," the precept "love your enemies." Tertullian again shows that the law of love finds an echo in the words of Isaiah, "Say ye to those that hate you, ye are our brethren,"[1]

[1] Haec Creator una pronuntiatione clusit per Esaïam: Dicite, Fratres nostri estis, eis qui vos oderunt.—Isa. lxv. 5.

and in Zechariah's, "Let no man remember the malice of his neighbour."[1] The words of the latter prophet enjoin something far beyond the patient endurance of wrong; they exhort us not even to remember our neighbour's offences against us. Our Lord's command to love our enemies is therefore no more than a natural advance on the morality of the Old Testament to forgive the injuries done by our friends.[2]

Tertullian carefully, and with the same moderation of tone which marked his view of the dangers of wealth, discusses the theory and the necessity of retributive punishment as proving a restraint to wickedness, and at the same time supplying the oppressed with the assurance that they are not forgotten.[3] The power of punishing sin is, in fact, a necessary attri-

[1] Zech. vii. 9.

[2] Plane haec Christus adiecerit, ut supplementa consentanea disciplinae Creatoris.—IV. 16.

[3] Is mihi imponit (the obligation of turning the cheek to the smiter, etc.) qui non sit me defensurus, in vacuum patientiam praecepit, non exhibens mihi mercedem praecepti, patientiae dico fructum, quod est ultio, quam mihi permisisse debuerat, si ipse non praestat.—IV. 16. It is to be regretted that Tertullian described his idea of the "fructus patientiae" in his dreadful conclusion to the *De Spectaculis*.

bute of God. But the Marcionite idea of the Perfect God will not allow Him to protect His own. The result is that under Him patience is wronged, and a door is opened to violence. He does not defend the good, nor punish the evil-doer.[1]

It seems to me that the parallel between Marcion's conception of Christ as a teacher without power to enforce his precepts in the presence of a Creator, or Law of Nature, if you prefer a more abstract term, is singularly in accord with our modern ideas.

Whether we will or not, we are compelled to recognise that what was formerly considered to be direct interference on the part of the Deity in the affairs of this world must be attributed to (I know no better term) natural laws. An outbreak of pestilence, for example, formerly regarded as a sure sign of Divine displeasure, is now seen to be traceable to definite causes, often to the neglect of the laws of health or cleanliness. We regard such legal phrases as "the act of God" as archaisms, which

[1] Sed hoc est Dei optimi, et tantum boni, patientiae iniuriam facere, violentiae ianuam pandere, probos non defendere, improbos non coërcere.—IV. 16.

have no longer the meaning they had to our forefathers. As our knowledge of law in the physical, yes, and even in the moral sphere, progresses, we are obliged to admit the constant diminution of the number of events due to no natural causes. Thus we tend to abandon the belief that there is any personal or direct interference in the course of nature by its Creator—even if we admit the possibility of the Universe being called into being by any First Cause external to itself.

The government of the world as it is carried on by the operation of natural laws is often so harsh that it is impossible to attribute it to a God, who, like Marcion's Creator, is the embodiment of abstract justice. Yet there is an analogy between Him and Nature regarded as the course of Law in the world. They are both powers working in opposition to that which our conscience tells us is the Highest Good, and the same remark applies to the popular conception of the God of Scripture.

But in the teaching of Jesus Christ men recognise an idea of God far higher than that of Nature, or even of the conception of the

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Deity formerly held by Christians. They feel, however, that the work of such a God is not to be discerned in the course of this world. By perhaps a totally different mental process from that of Marcion they arrive at a result identical with his, namely, that there exist two Gods: He who is described in Scripture as the God of the Jews, and is the personification of Natural Law; and One who is the supreme ideal of goodness, but can only be thought of as detached from the world. He has an existence, like the God of Marcion, apart from all the domain of sense, and has nothing to do with the life of any save of those pure souls to whom He reveals himself.

But, as Tertullian clearly perceives, such a God is nothing more than a God of Epicurus. We have no knowledge of His existence, no evidence of His power. Christ, in His name, gives us precepts, but nothing more. He exhorts to patience, but He has no help to offer us. He condemns sin in word, rather than in act. And to put it plainly, what is a God of this sort? He is no reality, but a creation of man's mind. There is no reason to ask His help, no reason to trust in Him:

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He is no present help in times of trouble. Can a God like this "speak in righteousness" and "be mighty to save?" Consequently Tertullian is, I make bold to affirm, right when he insists that God cannot reasonably exhort us to practise any virtue, like patience, for example, unless He can give some token that He is at least able to reward us. *Patientiae fructus quod est ultio*, to use Tertullian's expression, may not satisfy our moral sense, but it conveys a truth that God, if He enjoins patience, must have the power of making it bear fruit.

It has often been asserted that human conduct ought *not* to be influenced by either fear of punishment or hope of reward. And I acknowledge that a great advance is made when men cease to regard religion in the light of a useful deterrent from vice, or as bribing us with promises to practise virtue. Granting this, however, we may fairly consider whether the teaching of Christ excludes all motives for faith and hope. Put aside if you please all theories of reward and punishment after death, and ask yourselves, Is it compatible with your idea of religion to hold that in the strife to fulfil the highest ideals of duty,

no reliance is to be placed in any Higher Power?

After all, what is religion? It cannot be confined to the promulgation of any code of morality however strict, or even of principles of action however exalted. It ought to concern itself with such things, but they are not its essence. Religion primarily depends on a reliance on some power, unseen and not in ourselves—it is that which plainly tells man that he is not self-sufficing, but that he needs assistance from the spiritual world. Take away this, and let me ask you seriously to consider what remains. Can you attach any serious meaning to the word "God," if you are unable to conceive of Him as taking any interest in the life of man? You may try to conserve the name of "God," under some form of Pantheism, by acknowledging that He is in all things (which is perfectly true, so far as it goes). But if you deny that He is a Being, who exercises any control over the Universe, over Nature, or over man, what elements of religion do you leave? Prayer? It is unnecessary. Faith? It is a delusion. The love of God? How can our affections be given to an abstraction? The

supremacy of God? He is dependent on "Natural Laws" in exactly the same sense as Marcion's "good God" depended on the Creator.[1]

I do not hide my conviction that the difficulty of imagining a Personal God is most serious. I can fully sympathize when those who devote themselves to the study of the Natural Sciences stumble at having to accept this dogma. I can well understand that it sometimes seems to them almost an act of treason to the true principles of scientific research to admit any interference with the course of Nature. But, on the other hand, I know that their religious impulse must always protest against thus eliminating God from their lives, and I am sure that few would desire this impulse to be completely crushed.[2]

To take a concrete example, however, let us consider the necessity of God's personal action in the hearts of men. Our Lord says, "Love your enemies, do good to those which hate you," etc. Does not this demand a surrender of natural (aye, and of justifiable feelings)?

[1] See Note 14 at end.
[2] See Note 15 at end.

To love one's enemy is easy to speak of but very hard to practise. It is hard not to hate him; for an enemy is one who wishes to do us an injustice. Our Lord told His disciples that they would have the fiercest and most unscrupulous of enemies—men who would hate them, and separate them from their company, and cast out their names as evil. Consider what such enmity meant. Social ostracism, disgrace, the stigma of a blighted name. The hardest things men can be called on to endure, worse than persecution, torture, death. It is one of the most intolerable trials to realise that one has such an enemy. It revolts our sense of justice[1] that hostility of this type should seek to hunt us down. A wise man might counsel us to ignore our enemies, to go on our way without seeking their hurt, to show mercy even to their children, and to their dumb beasts, as Moses commanded. But to love them, to take them to our hearts! How can unaided human nature do this?

And here comes the question of Divine authority. If our Lord was a mere man,

[1] See Note 16 at end.

He was telling His disciples to do that which was impossible.[1] He declared this to be the will of His Father, but He had no authority to promise God's help. Need we trouble ourselves about such a command? May we not put the whole Sermon on the Mount aside, as containing precepts ideal, but unattainable? But if we believe that Jesus Christ came forth from God with power not only to command but to help; if we believe that God can so transform the heart as to make it possible for us to "Love our enemies," then we have conceded the principle that God is a Living God, able to intervene in the course of human affairs; for surely to change the heart and affections of man is really greater than any physical miracle. Only our ignorance of the laws which govern our moral being prevent the recognition of the fact.

Nevertheless so great are the difficulties in the way of men accepting the beliefs of their youth, whether they are regarded from a scientific, historical, or critical aspect, that it is an undeniable temptation to do what Marcion attempted—that is, to sever the

[1] See Note 17 at end.

sphere of religion from that of practical life. To do this all questions of evidence must be set aside, and religion must become purely subjective, a matter of personal experience. As I shall show later, Marcionism is so much in harmony with modern thought, that some have thought that it is the form of primitive Christianity which approached nearest to the Truth.

In Tertullian's day it was the one really formidable rival to the Catholic Church. Marcion had been dead some forty years when Tertullian devoted his longest extant treatise to the refutation of his opinions. Other Gnostics were content with lecture rooms, where they gave instruction to a select few. Marcion bid boldly against the Church for the leadership of the Christian world. He had rival places of worship, rival sacraments, a rival hierarchy. His followers in discipline and austerities surpassed the Catholics. They were brave confessors in times of persecution, they eagerly sought the martyr's crown.

Yet was the life of the sect a short one. At the beginning of the third century its influence was widespread, it was not without

influence a hundred years later, but by the sixth century it had almost disappeared.[1] The system was, in fact, inherently weak. Built on a shifting foundation of sentiment, it was not grounded on any solid basis of fact. It tried to substitute the religious consciousness of individuals for an historic faith, an abstraction for the Living God. The more we admire Marcion, the readier we are to acknowledge that he did great service to the faith by bringing valuable truths of spiritual experience into prominence; the more prone we are to contrast Tertullian unfavourably with him, the more are we compelled to admit the completeness of the failure of his opinions.

For a Divine message must be one that is suited to all time. Its vitality must be such that it is constantly causing men to hear and obey, and such is the message of Jesus Christ as delivered by His Church.

[1] An inscription was found in a Syrian village dated A.D. 318 telling of the existence of a συναγωγὴ Μαρκιωνιστῶν. This is more ancient than any *dated* inscription referring to a Catholic Church. Theodoret mentions the Marcionites A.D. 440 (circa). Provision is made for their reconciliation to the Church by the Council, "in Trullo" 692. There are evidences of some lingering remains of the sect in the tenth century. —"Dictionary of Christian Biography," Article, *Marcion*.

To return to our subject. We have reached the words of our Lord, "Give to every one that asketh thee," and Tertullian's treatment of them is noticeable for the clear way in which he shows his appreciation of progressive revelation. The Marcionites made an "antithesis" between our Lord's command, and that in Deut. xv., "Thou shalt not harden thine heart nor shut thine hand from thy poor brother." The law was narrow, insisting only on charity to the brethren; the precept of the Lord broad and embracing all men.[1]

Tertullian maintains that the same spirit prompted both; the one is but an extension of the other. Kindness to our brethren is the first step; to strangers is but a step in advance. Mercy to our kindred is due to the promptings of nature; kindness to strangers befits a more perfect dispensation.[2]

[1] Nunc si qui voluerit argumentari, Creatorem quidem fatribus dari jussisse, Christum vero omnibus petentibus; ut hoc sit novum atque diversum, immo unum erit ex his per quae lex Creatoris erat in Christo. Non enim aliud Christus in omnes praecipit quam quod Creator in fratres. —IV. 16.

[2] Nam etsi maior est bonitas quae operatur in extraneos, sed non prior ea quae ante debetur in proximos . . . quod si secundus gradus bonitatis est in extraneos, qui in proximos primus est, etc.—IV. 16.

Besides, Christ came to create a far wider brotherhood than that of Israel, by bringing all men into His kingdom; and to do this He made the laws of the Creator extend to the whole of humanity: for in Him all are made brethren.[1]

When he comes to the words, "And as ye would that men should do unto you, do ye also to them likewise," Tertullian rightly points out that this command implies an opposite injunction: "As ye would that men should not do to you," etc. But if it is the case that God's will was first being made known in the Sermon on the Mount, such commands would be unbefitting, implying, as they do, previous instruction as to right action. "I must learn," says Tertullian, "what I ought to choose or refuse for myself, and not be left to a chance medley of my own opinion, which binds me to no proper rule of action."

If, then, Marcion's God gave men this golden rule, He failed to prepare them for its reception, and left everything vague and undetermined; whereas the Creator is more fitted

[1] Christus in omnes legem paternae bonitatis extendit, neminem excipiens in miseratione, sicut in vocatione.—IV. 16.

to pronounce it, having prepared for it by the teaching of the Old Testament, and left nothing vague and undetermined.[1]

In his arguments Tertullian, as usual, is sound; and in pointing out the need of progressive and continuous revelation, he is absolutely right. Yet he does not to me seem to have quite grasped our Lord's meaning. The craving for precise definition, the legalism so strong in the Latin mind, displays itself, making Tertullian blind to the fact that such a precept as Christ's golden rule cannot be reduced to a mere legal enactment. It does not seem as if he perceived how far-reaching it is, that it must be interpreted spiritually; and in his desire to gain a logical victory, he has lost sight of the full purport of the command.

Time will not allow us to dwell upon more of this interesting book; and I shall even say nothing on the rest of Tertullian's ex-

[1] Hoc si novus Deus et ignotus retro et nondum plane editus praecepit, qui me nulla antehac institutione formaverit, qua prius scirem quid deberem mihi velle vel nolle, atque ita et aliis facere quae mihi vellem, non facere quae et mihi nollem, passivitatem sententiae meae permisit, nec adstrinxet me ad convenientiam voluntatis et facti, ut id aliis facerem quod mih ivelim et id nec aliis faciam quod mihi nolim.—IV. 16.

planation of our Lord's great discourses, as it does not bear materially on my argument. A great deal of patristic literature fails to appeal to us, because the methods of exegesis are such as cannot satisfy the requirements of our age. The attempt to recognise Christ in every story, and to find a prediction in every statement, however plain or however unintelligible, throughout the Old Testament, seems to us, with our more historical and critical ways of reading the Bible, little more than trifling. I am inclined to think that the very fact that we realise that the preparation for Christ, as revealed by our more intelligent study of the Old Testament, is shown there more plainly than ever, makes us a little impatient (perhaps unduly so) of the antiquated methods which so long prevailed.

May I, however, digress so far as to remind you of the great importance of Marcion in the critical study of the text of the New Testament and of the interesting readings which he has preserved?

Let me now conclude my lecture by reading to you Tertullian's peroration to this his fourth book, the last words of which I wish particularly to commend to your atten-

tion as supplying, I would suggest, the most important fact to be borne in mind in all our religious controversies :—

"We have, I think, done what we undertook. We have shown by the teaching of the prophets, by His maxims, His affections, His feelings, by His virtues, by His sufferings, even by His resurrection, that Jesus Christ is none other than the Creator's Christ, inasmuch as also when He sent forth the Apostles to preach to all nations, He commanded 'their sound to go forth into all lands, and their voice unto the ends of the world,' in fulfilment of the Psalmist's words.[1] I am sorry for thee, Marcion, thou has laboured in vain; for the Christ Jesus in thy Gospel is mine also."

It has been necessary at times to call your attention to Tertullian's limitations, to his narrowness, to his failure to realise the width, as well as the depth, of the Gospel

[1] Implevimus, ut opinor, sponsionem. Exhibuimus Jesum Christum prophetarum doctrinis, sententiis, affectibus, sensibus, virtutibus, passionibus, etiam resurrectione, non alium quam Creatoris, siquidem et Apostolos mittens ad praedicandum universis nationibus "in omnem terram exire sonum eorum et in terminos terrae voces eorum" (Ps. xix. 5) Psalmum adimplendo praecepit. Misereor tui, Marcion, frustra laborasti. Christus enim Jesus in Evangelio tuo, meus est.—IV. 43.

message. But here let us recognise the greatness of the man, the liberality of the thought: "Christus enim Jesus in Evangelio tuo, meus est." He has not spared Marcion's attempt to edit St Luke; he was never fond of soft speeches, this stern African controversialist, and yet he is willing to admit that Marcion did not invent a new Christ, but merely saw Him in a distorted view. Marcion had tried to prove that he was teaching some new doctrine, but his efforts were in vain. He tried to bring forward a new idea of Christ, and after all he is only a fresh witness to the Catholic teaching concerning Him: "The Christ Jesus in your Gospel is mine also."

How true is this! Yet how few of us can realise the fact! We have so many representations of Christ nowadays, so many errors concerning His work and Person; but at the same time you cannot speak to any one about our Lord and not feel that, however far he may differ from you in other respects, his Christ is yours also.

It is not easy to regard the severe criticism, to which the canonical Gospels are being subjected, without an apprehension that when

the last word has been said there may be left but a small residuum of historical fact concerning our Lord. But even though the details of the figure may be partly obliterated, as we examine them more critically than heretofore, the general outline remains the same, and the impression it creates is that Christ's appearance is something so absolutely unique in human history as to be beyond man's understanding. Even after men have criticised the Gospel so far as to pronounce the story of the miraculous Incarnation of the Saviour to be non-historical; when, like Marcion, they have declared their belief that His resurrection from the dead must be taken as having a moral rather than a literal meaning; when they have explained the story of His life without those elements which we consider miraculous; when, again following Marcion, they have denied that He was the Messiah for whom the prophets looked—what remains? Nothing, you may say. Nay, there still stands forth One so totally different from anything the world has seen before or since, that no adequate explanation of His appearance can satisfy, save the doctrine of the Universal Church that Jesus

is the Son of the Living God. After they have finished what seems to be the demolition of the Evangelical story, the critics who think they are most advanced are, as a rule, compelled to give our Lord a place by Himself in the world's history. They seem to own by their very desire to rationalise the story of Jesus, that His person is absolutely unique among men, that there is a Divinity about Him which renders Him unassailable. To each of these the Church can nearly always say, "Christus Jesus in Evangelio tuo meus est."

A single instance may suffice, though I am taking it from the writings of one who I am sure would not willingly even appear to deny our Saviour's Godhead. In a work recently published the author of one of the most thoughtful essays in the volume is discussing what must be retained at all cost. Supposing, he asks, we had to abandon all the accepted views of our Lord's birth, death, resurrection . . . what cannot be abandoned? And his answer is "a belief in the sinlessness of Christ." [1]

Were our knowledge of the laws governing

[1] See Note 18 at end.

the heart and conduct of man equal to that which has been attained concerning his physical constitution, it is possible that the idea of One who had lived without sin in thought, word, or deed might be considered to be as unthinkable as any miraculous view of the birth or resurrection of Christ can be to anybody at the present time. Since, therefore, Jesus as a sinless man is a phenomenon not less strange than one over whom death can have no dominion, and, who rose again from the grave, there is a point on which some, who reject the dogmatic teaching of the creeds, but acknowledge the sinlessness of Christ, can agree with those who accept their doctrine in its entirety. For the sinlessness of our Saviour is, after all, perhaps a more complete proof of His Divine nature than any miracle could be. Power, as has been truly said, is not God's highest attribute, nor is it this that draws mankind to worship. We worship the Father because He is revealed to us as perfect righteousness, and in the perfect spotlessness of the character of Christ we see the image of the Father. Those, then, who, whilst denying the Divinity, admit the sinlessness of Christ, are more at one

with us than perchance they or we are prepared to admit, and we may say to them "Christus Jesus in Evangelio vestro, noster est."

It is a fact that every teacher who has attempted to explain the Gospel story so as to adapt it to the ideas current at the present time, as Marcion did for a very different age, has inevitably been led into admitting something which, if pressed to its logical conclusion, can only lead to the acceptance of the Christian doctrine of the perfect Godhead and perfect Manhood of our Lord. Marcion, in accordance with the popular philosophic ideas of the second century, was led to believe in a Christ who was no more than a shadowy phantom, and whose coming was something isolated from all the previous history of this world. With this idea dominant in his mind he read St Luke's Gospel, and, like most men possessed of a theory, he did not hesitate by alteration and excision to make the Gospel agree with his peculiar views. And with what result? Tertullian is actually able to take the Gospel as Marcion had arranged it, and to show in every page that it revealed, not the Christ

in whom the Marcionites believed, but Him whom the Catholic Church adored.

This seems to be the case with every genuine attempt to say what Christ really was. Even though it be entered upon with the fixed idea that He was but an ordinary man with what is called "a genius for religion," the candid mind cannot fail in the end to be impressed with the idea that He was much more. I venture to think that were Tertullian living now he could do to almost any rationalising account of our Lord what he did to Marcion's Lucan Gospel, and after exposing the fallacies and inconsistencies, exclaim, "Thou has laboured in vain: your Christ is mine."

An encouraging sign of the times, especially for those who fear that religion is losing its hold on the minds of men, is that, though many good men cannot accept the Creed of the Christian Church, there is no thoughtful person who can withhold his admiration from the Man Christ Jesus. There is little controversy about Him; we dispute about what men say of Him. At least we are agreed that no man ever attained His standard of purity and goodness. It may be, therefore,

that this is after all the basis of true religious union—a common love and admiration of the character of Jesus Christ, leading up to a common reverence and worship, and ending in a universal acknowledgment that He is indeed the Son of God. Grievous indeed would it be, if we could not say to any seeker after truth, who knew the story of His life, "Christus Jesus in Evangelio tuo, meus est."

LECTURE IV.

PAULINE THEOLOGY.

"Whether then it be I or they, so we preach, and so ye believed."—1 Cor. xv. 11.

Marcion is certainly to be commended as the earliest Christian non-canonical writer to appreciate the greatness of St Paul. Even the author of the Acts of the Apostles appears hardly conscious of the originality of conception, which characterised his preaching and missionary labours. At all events, he is not explicit on this point. We infer St Paul's greatness from what is related of him in the Acts, rather than from what is expressly stated. St Luke is, in fact, so anxious to show the essential unity between St Paul and the immediate disciples of our Lord that he scarcely does justice to the way in which the course of primitive Christianity was directed by the genius of this extraordinary

man. Tertullian naturally follows in the steps of Christian tradition. It was, and indeed it is still, of the utmost importance to show that St Paul was not an innovator, and that Catholic Christianity was not the outcome of his theology only; and accordingly stress was laid on the fact that St Paul did but continue the work of the first followers of Christ.[1] But though this is true, and in this lecture it is my object to demonstrate the fact, it is not for this reason right to depreciate St Paul's claim to have inaugurated a new departure in Christian work. Marcion, as I have said, first called attention to this.

The fifth book of Tertullian's treatise is occupied with an examination of those writings of St Paul on which Marcionism was founded. Marcion's canon, I may perhaps remind you, consists of St Luke's Gospel in a

[1] Weitzäcker in his "Apostolic Age" concedes this most important point. He is speaking on the effect of the growing belief in the resurrection among the first followers of our Lord. "Here," he says, "we have the starting-point for the belief that ended in the doctrine of Christ's superhuman nature." Paul was the first, so far as we know clearly, to follow out this path. But he did not do so *in opposition to the original apostles.* On this point there was no dispute.—Vol. i. p. 19. E.T.

shortened form and ten epistles of St Paul. Tertullian discusses them in the following order: Galatians, Corinthians, Romans, Thessalonians, Laodiceans (for Marcion thought the destination of Ephesians was Laodicaea), Colossians, Philippians, and Philemon. Marcion does not accept the Pastoral Epistles, and neither he nor Tertullian acknowledge the Epistle to the Hebrews as Pauline.

The Acts of the Apostles is not in Marcion's canon—indeed he could hardly have accepted such a work, as his whole system depends on the rejection of the idea of St Paul and the Twelve having lived in harmony with one another. Here we have another parallel between the ideas of the second and those of the twentieth century. Those who deny the historical continuity of the Christian Church must get rid of the "Acts." To admit its authority as a genuine production of the Apostolic age is to confess that our Lord *began* ποιεῖν τε καὶ διδάσκειν, and that His followers went on immediately with His work. Thus all who, like Marcion, make Christianity a sentiment, or a personal experience, rather than a creed with an

unbroken life, must at all costs set aside the authority of the "Acts" to speak as history.

Tertullian wisely allows his opponent to choose his own ground, and refuses to argue from any Scriptures which Marcion is unwilling to accept. I have so much to say on the whole subject before us that I have little time for details, and I must content myself with giving a brief and imperfect sketch of some few passages from the fifth book against Marcion.

As in the previous book, Tertullian's object is to show that the Catholic Church, unlike Marcion, saw in St Paul a continuator of the work of our Lord and His immediate followers; just as he had proved the Christ of Marcion's revised Gospel to be Him whom the Church adored. With this object the question of St Paul's Apostleship is raised. "I deny this," exclaims Tertullian, "in order that I may force you to prove it. I deny it, in order that I may convince you that he (St Paul) is mine."[1]

The late selection of St Paul as an Apostle is justified by an appeal to Jacob's prophecy

[1] Nego, ut te probare compellam. Nego, ut meum esse convincam.—V. 1.

concerning Benjamin, to whose tribe St Paul belonged.[1] This is, of course, introduced to prove that the Apostle had been foretold in the Creator's Scripture.[2]

Let us take Tertullian's discussion of the Epistle to the Galatians, the most anti-Judaic of all his writings; and the explanation of 1 Corinthians xv., the chapter dealing with the Resurrection.

The chief argument deduced from the Galatian letter to prove that the God of St Paul was the same as the God of the Old Testament is that, had not this been the case, the epistle need not have been written. Had St Paul preached a new God, the Galatians could have had no inducement to turn to the Mosaic Law, and St Paul's arguments against the Judaizers would have been entirely different. As it was, the Apostle had to show from the Old Testament that the ancient Law itself pointed to a time when it would be abrogated by the coming of a new dispensation. Tertullian also naturally

[1] Gen. xlxx. 27. Beniamin lupus rapax, ad matutinum comedet adhuc, et ad vesperam dabit escam. This is referred to St Paul, who in early life persecuted the Church; and in his later days fed the flock of Christ.—V. 1.

[2] See Note 19 at end.

dwells on the friendly relations between St Paul and the "pillar apostles" described in the second chapter of this epistle, and lays stress on the fact that they approved of the preaching of St Paul when he submitted his doctrine to them at Jerusalem.[1]

The importance of this part of the argument is the weight given to the unbroken continuity of Divine revelation. One of the most important effects, which modern scientific thought has had upon religious ideas, has been the realisation that a certain law of development is followed even in revelation, and that so far as we can judge there is no such thing as a *catastrophe* either in nature or in the spiritual world.[2] Now, according to Marcion, the appearance of Christ was non-natural. It was a catastrophe interrupting the course of human history. According to St Paul, it was a regular stage in the development of the revelation of God to man. Christ came "when the fulness of the times was come"; that is, when all was ready for His coming. It is thus we are beginning to read the history of God's

[1] See Note 20 at end.
[2] See Note 21 at end.

dealings with man. We are no longer, for example, shocked at the idea that in early Israel there prevailed many crude and barbarous ideas of religion, morality and duty. We no longer find it necessary to justify every precept or action approved in the Old Testament, which does not commend itself to our conscience. On the contrary, we acknowledge that the ideas of bygone ages tend to serve as warnings, rather than examples, and we recognise a steady progress in man's conception of the will of God.

I believe myself that this scientific method of regarding revelation will lead men to do justice to St Paul. Hitherto this Apostle has been regarded as responsible for those dogmatic systems, which have tended to narrow and limit the beneficent effects of Christ's Gospel. We connect St Paul with the hard creeds of the Predestinarians and Calvinists, and turn with relief from his teaching on faith to St John with his doctrine of love. But if we recognise that it was under St Paul's guidance that the Christian Church freed herself from the trammels of Judaism without breaking with the past, we shall acknowledge that he was the first to

realise the now universally accepted theory of orderly development in the spiritual world; and that he possessed the rare gift of knowing how much may be abandoned, and what must be retained.[1] If the distortions of Pauline doctrine by others have brought the Apostle's teaching into discredit, these cannot be laid to his charge; and when they are forgotten, the enormous debt the Church owes to his life and writings will be recognised. If Marcion overrated the importance of St Paul's teaching, we must at least credit him for realising it.

We now come to the great chapter in the Epistle to the Corinthians, in which St Paul declares the doctrine of the Resurrection of our Lord and of its effects on the world.

To understand Tertullian's doctrine of the Resurrection we must study his treatise "On the Resurrection of the Flesh," in which he speaks of the dignity of man's body. As we have already seen, Tertullian's reverence for nature brings him into touch with the modern

[1] The new Church possessed a sacred book, the Old Testament. Paul, although he taught that the Law had become of no avail, found a means of preserving the whole of the Old Testament.—Harnack, "What is Christianity?" p. 186, E.T.

scientific spirit. As men, he says, disdain to put precious jewels in any setting but one of gold, so God has chosen the flesh to be the receptacle of the soul, which we have derived from Him. It is through the senses of the flesh that the soul of man receives information; and, in fact, the flesh is not only the servant of the soul, but it becomes its consort and co-heir in things temporal, and why not also in things eternal?[1]

Tertullian draws a sharp distinction between the philosophic doctrine of the immortality of the soul and the Christian teaching about the resurrection. Many wise men, he acknowledges, assert that the soul is Divine, and promise it immortality; and the vulgar, confident that this is the case, do worship to the dead, believing that their souls still exist. The stumbling-block therefore is, not the doctrine of the immortality of the soul, but that of the resurrection of the body. It was for this that St Paul contended at Corinth. This it was that his opponents denied, there

[1] "De Resurrectione Carnis," vii.: Porro si universa per carnem subiacent animae, carni quoque subiacent. Per quod utaris, cum eo utaris necesse est. Ita caro, dum ministra et famula animae deputatur, consors et cohaeres invenitur. Si temporalium, cur non et aeternorum?—See *passim*, i.-viii.

was no controversy about the life of the soul; for that, as Tertullian says, would have been superfluous.

What, enquires Tertullian, do we really mean by the word *dead?* Surely that which has lost its life (*anima*). Now, as the death of the body is brought about by the loss of the *anima*, the word *dead* must refer to the body alone. It is the same with the word *resurrection.*[1] The particle *re* must have the sense of the restoration of that which has perished, and it could not refer to the imperishable soul. Resurrection therefore must apply to the body.

It is hardly necessary to say that Tertullian follows St Paul in maintaining that the resurrection is not to be taken so much in a literal as in a spiritual sense; the body, it is

[1] Mortuorum resurrectionem quomodo quidam tunc negarint prius dispiciendum est. Utique eodem modo quo et nunc; siquidem semper resurrectio carnis negatur. Ceterum animam et sapientium plures divinam vindicantes salvam repromittunt, et vulgus ipsum ea praesumptione defunctos colit, qua animas eorum manere confidit. Ceterum corpora aut ignibus statim aut feris aut etiam diligentissime condita, temporibus tamen aboleri manifestum est. Si ergo carnis resurrectionem negantes Apostolus retundit, utique adversus illos tuetur quod illi negabant, carnis scilicet resurrectionem. Habes compendio responsum. Cetera iam ex abundanti.—V. 9.

true, will be raised again, but as a spiritual body, changed by the power of God from the natural or "animal" body in which it is sown. The life which animated our earthly bodies will be transformed into the life of the spirit at the resurrection.[1]

Marcion's denial of the resurrection of the body was a necessary part of his system, in which evil was made to be inherent in matter. He quoted St Paul's words, "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God," as meaning that we must divest ourselves of all material substance before we can enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. Tertullian, however, asks how, if this is the case, it could be said, "They who are in the flesh cannot please God"? When can we please God except whilst we are in the flesh? It is evident, therefore, that "in the flesh" must be taken to mean "whilst we live after the flesh," *i.e.* following our carnal impulses.

You may perhaps think that Tertullian's

[1] The resurrection of the body is necessary to the realisation of the life of the spirit. St Paul knows nothing of Hellenic or Oriental dualism. The body is not the detachable envelope, but the proper organ of the spirit. Its existing form of flesh and blood perishes, but only to be reconstituted in fitter fashion.—Hastings, "Bible Dictionary," Article *Paul the Apostle*, vol. iii. p. 729*a*.

insistence on the fact that, according to Christian belief, the body will be raised from the dead, makes his whole argument on this important subject unworthy of your attention. His language, however, like that of St Paul, forbids us to charge him with materialism. The tender reverence with which the Christians treated the bodies of their dead was at least free from the superstition that the preservation of the body was necessary to ensure its resurrection. They saw the mutilated corpses of their most honoured martyrs, devoured by beasts or committed to the flames, without questioning that they would rise again. Death, not burial, was the sowing of a natural body that it might be raised a spiritual body.

Bearing this in mind, may we not contrast the spirit in which Tertullian and Marcion treat the writings of St Paul?

Whether men accept or reject the opinions of St Paul, they cannot fail to recognise that he was a man of extraordinary genius. Now, one of the greatest proofs of genius in any work is that all men seem to recognise in it something they themselves would fain express. As we gaze on a picture by some master, or

hear a great musical composition, or read the words of a true poet, we feel that our own ideas are being interpreted. There is, I think, no greater proof of genius than in being able to awaken many responsive chords in different hearts. St Paul's writings have certainly done this. The most diverse minds have seen their own unexpressed thoughts in the Apostle's words. They have gone, as it were, below the surface of his obvious meaning, and penetrated, as they suppose, to their true sense. This is what I believe Marcion did, when he read into St Paul's Epistles his fantastic doctrine of a twofold deity, and refused to acknowledge the plain fact that in some sense St Paul preached the resurrection of the body. This is what many are striving to do at this present day, when they make the Apostle voice the current ideas of our age.

But is not, after all, the simplest explanation of St Paul's teaching the most likely to be true? Is it not, for example, most probable that on such a subject as the resurrection the Apostle stated his actual belief that, because our Lord Jesus Christ had risen from the dead, the Spirit which had

quickened His body would also give life to ours, and that this was from the very first the accepted belief of the whole Church? Would not any person, reading the New Testament dispassionately and for the first time, acknowledge that the writers were not insisting on the ancient belief in the immortality of the soul, and its life after death, but on the fact that Jesus Christ had given a revelation to men that they should rise again, to give an account of the works done in the body? Would he not observe that this was the doctrine which caused the Athenians to scoff at the Faith? Would it be natural to read Acts xvii. 32, "And when they heard of the immortality of the soul some mocked," in place of "When they heard of the resurrection of the dead"? Had those who heard St Paul on Areopagus thought that he had been discoursing on the immortality of the soul, would they not have been mocking their own most venerated teachers? That they should have scorned the idea of a resurrection of the body was only to be expected, for, as Tertullian says, this presented the great stumbling-block in accepting the Faith.

Yet this belief has always been an integral part of the Creed; and, difficult as it may be to accept, it is not really more incredible than the view that our bodies die for ever, whilst the soul has an everlasting life. It is to many thinkers impossible to conceive of spirit as a thing divorced from matter in such a way as to imagine that when the soul leaves the body it has a separate and independent existence. Still harder is it to think of personality in connection with pure spirit, as all Oriental systems, which draw a sharp distinction between the world of sense and that of spirit, find. Admitting, as they generally do, that spirit is eternal, they find it impossible to hold a belief in conscious immortality. Their idea of the consummation of all things is when all individuality is merged in the Spirit of the Universe.

Now, to speak plainly, I believe Tertullian is right in teaching that the Christian doctrine of immortality does not depend on philosophy but on revelation. The case is briefly this: Either we have received a revelation that there is a life after death (and I know no other save that of Jesus Christ), or we are left in complete uncertainty

as to what happens when this life is ended. In this case there is a contest between man's natural feeling that all does not end with death, and scientific probability that life is some hitherto unknown force acting upon matter, and cannot continue when separated from it. The Christian belief in a life to come can only rest upon revelation. Now, a revelation is a historical fact, and it is of the utmost importance that the roots of our faith should hold fast to it. This is the great difference between an historical creed and a conviction due to sentiment alone like Marcionism.

The affinity of Marcionism with modern religious thought is shown by the high appreciation which its originator receives from the theologians of Protestant Germany. By them Marcion is represented as a reformer—"Up to his death he did not abandon the purpose of winning the whole of Christendom, and therefore again and again he sought connection with it." . . . "It was Marcion's purpose to give all value to faith alone, to make it dependent on its own convincing power, and to avoid all philosophic paraphrase and argument."

In the Marcionite Churches "Brotherly equality, freedom from all ceremonies, and strict Evangelical discipline were to rule." His was "Paulinism in its religious strength, but without dialectic, without the Jewish-Christian view of history, and a religion detached from the soil of the Old Testament was to him the true Christianity." "Marcion, like Paul, felt that the religious value of a law with commandments and ceremonies was very different from that of a uniform law of love. Accordingly he had the capacity for appreciating the Pauline view of faith; it is to him the reliance on the unmerited grace of God, which is revealed in Christ." The very contradictions in his system are "the clearest proofs that Marcion was a religious character, that he had in general nohting to do with principles, but with living beings whose power he felt, and that what he ultimately saw in the Gospels was not an explanation of the world, but redemption from the world—redemption from a world which, even at the best that it can offer, has nothing that can reach the height of the blessing bestowed in Christ."

The Marcionite Church is, moreover, repre-

sented as an ideal community in which men of the most diverse opinions could live in amity. "Apart from Apelles, who founded a church of his own, we hear nothing of the controversies of disciples breaking up the Marcionite Church. All those who lived in the faith for which their master had worked — that the laws ruling in nature and history, as well as the course of common legality and righteousness, are the antithesis of the act of Divine mercy in Christ—those who rejected the Old Testament and clung to the Gospel proclaimed by Paul, and those who held that mortification of the flesh and renunciation of the world were demanded in the name of the Gospel, felt themselves members of the same community, and to all appearance allowed perfect liberty to speculations about final causes." [1]

Thus does Dr Harnack, in his "History of Dogma," describe Marcionism, and it is my belief that something resembling the Marcionite Church would satisfy the ideal which a great many now hold of the Church of the future. Dr Harnack has

[1] "History of Dogma," ch. v.

described a form of Christianity essentially subjective, more dependent upon individual experiences than upon an historic faith; a Church without any of the restrictions of officialism and ceremonial law, a community united by a common sentiment rather than by a common faith.

It was, in fact, a sort of reformed Church of the second century, based upon the sort of restatement of Christianity which men now demand. "Christianity," it has been said recently, "if it is to retain the allegiance of men trained in the science and philosophy of the age, must be reorganized and restated."

The experiment was tried in the second century under favourable circumstances. The Catholic Church, imperfectly organized as she then was, contained many elements of weakness. The prophetic dispensation was giving place to an official hierarchy. The favour of the first believers was waxing cold, and much uncertainty existed on matters of importance, both in faith and practice. Gnosticism made headway daily and was undermining the Creed. It was the very time for a man like Marcion, a teacher, unlike some of the Gnostics, of

blameless character and undoubted zeal. He preached no half-heathen philosophy, but a reformed Christianity, purified from Jewish corruption, and declaring Christ's message in its integrity. He does not appear to have fettered his disciples by dogmas, he made no demand on their belief in the supernatural, he offered no evidence save that of the heart and conscience; all he demanded was that men should put their trust in the love of God and in Jesus Christ.[1]

Churches sprang up on all sides. The Marcionites rivalled the Catholics in purity of government, and in zeal for the Saviour's honour; for Him they lived and died as martyrs. Yet it is a simple fact that Marcionism vanished, not so much owing to the intolerance of the dominant form of Christianity, as in the course of time. It did no more than satisfy a temporary need: unlike the Church, it was not meant to last for all ages.

I have brought the subject before your notice in these lectures more as an enquirer than as a teacher. Far from having ex-

[1] See Note 21 at end.

hausted it, I have but sketched the outlines. The points I have neglected are probably more interesting to you than those on which I have dwelt; for Marcion's chief claim to notice is not so much as a teacher as a witness to the state of the text of the New Testament in the second century. All I can hope to have done is to have shown a certain consistency in my aim. The question raised by Marcionism is practically this: What were the essentials of the Christian Faith previous to the year 180 A.D.? There are those who are prepared to maintain that up to this time there were no very distinct features in the Christian Creed, and the existence of the various Gnostic sects is cited in proof of this.

Since 180 A.D. it is admitted that there have been but few additions to the Faith. We are therefore asked to believe that from the days of our Lord to those of Irenaeus, a period short of one hundred and fifty years, the simple teachings of a Galilaean peasant, mainly on the moral relations of man to God and his neighbour, grew into what is now practically the Creed of the Church. Broadly speaking, the view held of early Church History is

something like this: Jesus, the Son of Joseph, taught the common people of Galilee a singularly pure morality, fragments of which are preserved, mostly in the Sermon on the Mount. Some years after His death, first Jewish and then Gentile sects were formed in the belief that He had risen from the dead. Owing to the labours and genius of a certain Paul, or to a school of writers under his name, the doctrines of these sects began to crystallize into certain definite forms. Gradually a certain type of belief became general, and in this way Catholic Christianity arose. This lasted till men found creeds and formulas of faith intolerable; and now Christianity really may be defined as a sentiment of admiration for the person and character of Jesus, which leads men to endeavour to imitate Him in the performance of their duties to themselves (purity, temperance, self-restraint), and to their fellow-men (love, active benevolence and self-sacrifice).

On the other hand, the Creed of the Church is essentially historical. It tells us that Jesus Christ was born, it is true, of a Virgin, but was in all respects as other

men, as regards His appearance, growth and development. He began by gathering a company of disciples around Him, and taught them; and as He lived amongst them in familiar intercourse they gradually learned who He was. They saw in Him first a Teacher, then a Prophet, then the Christ on whom Israel's hopes were centred; lastly, after His crucifixion they realised that He was indeed the only begotten Son of the Father. When He had ascended into Heaven, His disciples at once gathered together and awaited the coming of the Spirit. After receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost they began to tell the world what Jesus Christ had done. They founded communities called churches, united in a common faith in Jesus. This faith remains unchanged, though from time to time there have been accretions, and Christians may have made their own theories into dogmas declared to be necessary for salvation. Still, when these are removed, the essential remains in the acceptance of Jesus Christ as the Saviour of the world, and in the acknowledgment of His complete Divinity. To this the Catholic Church is irrevocably pledged.

And now, brethren, I must ask you to weigh these alternatives — the faith of the Creed and indefinite Christianity. Think well before you surrender the former. Remember that this faith is confined to no one branch of the Church. You will find it in the official teaching of almost every Christian body—Catholic, Reformed, aye, and even in the case of those who profess Arian or Unitarian opinions: for these too accept a Christ risen from the dead.

Let us consider carefully also what indefinite creedless Christianity really means. It is only Marcionism in a new guise. The historic Christ is gone, but the desire for Him remains and an imaginary Christ takes His place. It matters little whether this imaginary figure be a phantom, as Marcion taught, or an idealized human being, as it is the fashion to speak of Him to-day. The way in which Marcion's school shrank from the thought of matter has its parallel in the modern indifference to facts in the sphere of religion. To many it seems to be actually a matter of indifference whether our Lord was really all that He is represented in the four Gospels or not. We are told not to

enquire too closely into the facts of His birth, His alleged miracles, His Messiahship, His resurrection, but to remain content with their spiritual significance.[1] And what is this but the old rationalism of the second century in a new guise? Marcion only did what we are all aiming at. He presented Christianity in a manner adapted to the views of his age. In so doing he showed unquestionable ability, sincerity, critical skill, and honesty of purpose. But how poor, how transitory were its results! Could Marcionism with its sentimentality, its unnatural asceticism, its shrinking from the material world, have preserved morality, have stemmed the tide of barbarism, have reorganized European society, have built modern civilisation out of the ruins of the Roman Empire? It is hard even to ask such a question without a smile.

Believe me, when I say it, that it is with no light heart that I have adopted this line of argument in these lectures. I do not fear the reproach of narrowness or intolerance: for this every one whose convictions are strong must encounter. It

[1] See Note 22 at end.

is rather that I fear even to seem desirous of shutting the door in the face of those who wish to remain in the Church, despite the growing conviction that the progress of modern thought demands the surrender of belief in all that seems incapable of a natural explanation.

Towards this end undogmatic Christianity is ever tending. The first step is to dispense with the Old Testament by denying that there is anything in it we are unable to explain away. Far be it from me to deprecate all attempts to give a perfectly natural explanation of events, which a more credulous age accepted as miracles; or to advocate such rigid adherence to the letter of Scripture, as to render legitimate criticism impossible. What I do protest against is the denial that the Old Testament contains an account of a self-revelation of God to the men of old time. It is repeatedly insisted upon in the Old Testament that God of His own will found Israel, and made Himself known to His people as they were able to bear it. The modern tendency is to assert that Israel found God, and this is not far

from maintaining that He was invented by them.

The same treatment is meted out to the New Testament. The purely human Jesus is represented as a moralist, not as a Saviour. His Godhead is not a fact, since the only way in which He was Deified was by the enthusiasm of His disciples. He brings no assurance of power to those who trust in Him. Even when He told His disciples, "Your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of these things," His words were but a sublime effort of human faith based on no certain knowledge. His Resurrection, resting as it does upon the evidence of partial witnesses, need cause us no perplexity, since we need not receive it as an actual historic fact. This is the result of the abandonment of all creeds.[1] Abolish dogmas and then reconstruct Christianity, and what a fragile edifice remains. There is hardly enough to stand the wear and tear of a single generation.

Yet the very attempt to reconstruct religion on a new basis, to retain the old names, whilst rejecting their meaning, to continue

[1] See Note 23 at end.

to administer sacraments, though their original significance is forgotten, to preserve the *simulacrum* of a Christian Church without the substance, is in itself an acknowledgment of the need of religion, if human society is to continue its progress. It is, however, little more than an endeavour to conceal the fact that we have abandoned the belief in a personal God and in human responsibility. And what answer can we make to those who would have us believe that all religious impulses are the result of unhealthy neurotic conditions, that right and wrong depend on the state of the body, that conscience is but instinct highly specialised, and that men are only seemingly responsible for their actions, if we have abandoned the Christian view of sin, of judgment, of pardon and salvation, all of which are based ultimately on revelation?

It is significant that the primitive Church seems always to have held the belief that those who were outside her pale might still hold the truth. Sectarians, like the Montanists, with their fantastic ideas of discipline, their extravagant pretensions to spiritual gifts and other marked peculiarities,

were doubtless far more troublesome than quiet Gnostic teachers, ever ready to conform outwardly, if only they might privately impart their views to a select few. Tertullian, with his stinging satire, his contemptuous patronage of the Catholic Christians, or "carnally minded ones" as he was pleased to style them, was a far more offensive opponent than a scholar and a sentimentalist like Marcion. Yet such was the intelligent toleration of the third century that Tertullian was accepted as a truly Christian teacher, and St Cyprian habitually called him "The Master." Very different was the attitude towards Gnosticism.

The leaders of the Church were well aware that, once the views it inculcated became incorporated in the Faith, very little Christianity would survive; and may we not learn a practical lesson from this?

However profoundly the Church was divided at the Reformation, the main tenets of the Faith have hitherto been maintained by all Christian bodies. Controversies have been waged on sacramental grace, on the future state, on the cultus of saints, on Church order: but the really essential points,

such as the Divinity of Christ, the Divine revelation in Scripture and salvation through Christ, have been left untouched. Now, however, the question is forced upon us: Can there exist a Christian Church without these things? Is it not, therefore, time for all Christians, who really believe in a revelation through Jesus Christ, to draw together and to lay aside the really trifling differences which now part them? Should they not recognise that the real points at issue are not sectarian disputes or rivalries, but whether all that most of us deem vital to Christianity is to be gradually eliminated or not? A speaker said the other day that the Church that could get hold of the masses was the Church of the future. The remark is characteristic of the spirit of the age. It can be interpreted to mean that Churches are like commercial rivals—the one who gets most custom will succeed best. But did Jesus Christ found the Church to win popular favour? Did He not entrust her with great truths and command her to spread them among men? If this is so, surely the Christian society which holds most firmly to the essential principles of

its Master's teaching, and presents them most fearlessly to the world, is doing His work most faithfully, and is most sure of His protection.

It may be objected that the analogy between the Church of the second century and that of our age is imperfect, and it cannot be denied that historical parallels are often misleading. But in one particular the resemblance between the two periods is closer than is generally supposed. The first point you would doubtless raise in criticising the parallel which I have attempted to draw between Gnosticism and modern thought would be that such a scheme as Marcion's was mere theory, whereas the objections to the Christian creeds now made are based on ascertained facts. No parallel can really exist between a scientific and an unscientific age.

Now, if the present controversy were one between ecclesiastic dogmas and ascertained facts, it would certainly present no parallel to those of the second century. With the progress of knowledge, Christians have had to modify their views on many subjects. We could not, for example, accept a theology

which made this earth the centre of the universe; or one in which the structure of man's body was taught to be essentially different from that of other vertebrates. But in these instances we have the facts of science opposed, not to the dogmas of the Church, but to inferences drawn from them—a very different thing. And this being the case, are we justified in rejecting the real dogmas of the Church, because they are in conflict not with ascertained facts, but with inferences drawn from them? The doctrine of a resurrection, for instance, cannot be opposed by a scientific fact, but only by inferences drawn from observation. No biologist is able to tell us exactly what life is; the most he can say is that it is highly improbable that it should, under any circumstances, be restored to a dead body, at least in a form involving continuous conscious personality. The parallel, therefore, between Marcionism and modern thought is at least allowable for us to use; in both cases theory is set against dogmas resting on alleged historic fact.

I do not deny that during the past fifty years many beliefs, once considered to be of

the highest importance, have been tacitly abandoned. Good and earnest men held views concerning such subjects as the Atonement and the Future State (to take but two instances) which scarcely any thoughtful person could entertain to-day. Nor can we ever forget how great a debt is due to those who had the courage to question the accepted religious views on these and like topics. We owe it to them that the dark Calvinism, the bitter Puritanism, the narrow Churchmanship, the arrogant Romanism, which made many generous spirits shudder at the very name of Christianity, have vanished into an obscurity, from which, God grant, they may never again emerge.

But in the work of dispelling these mists, which obscured the glory of the Faith, it was unnecessary to go behind any doctrine to which the Universal Church is irrevocably committed. No dogmas concerning the Atonement, the exact condition of the souls of the dead, or the literal inspiration of Scripture, belong to the first three centuries. Save in our own Church of England it would be perhaps impossible to find men differing more in opinion than those who were

embraced by the Church in the first days of the Faith.

But you will have to set aside every Christian document belonging to the first century before you can maintain that in the primitive Church the universal belief was not that the Man Jesus was the Divine Christ, that He had brought life and salvation to the world, and that in proof of this God had raised Him from the dead.

From the day the Church of England asserted her freedom from Rome, she took her stand on Scripture and primitive tradition. She refused to commit herself to any doctrine, practice or theory of government unable to bear an appeal to these tests. For this reason she, perhaps alone of all Christian societies, can display the liberal spirit of the early days. Like the Church of the fourth century, she can call those outside her pale to help her in upholding the essentials of the Faith, and they may strive with her as allies in the cause of truth, as the Novatians co-operated with the Catholics at Nicæa. Like the Church of the third century, she can imitate St Cyprian

in calling a schismatical writer whose doctrine is true "a master." Like the Church of the second century, she can treat questions of tradition not affecting the Faith with indifference, as Pope Anicetus and St Polycarp did the keeping of Easter. Like the great teacher of the first century, she can be "all things to all men" that she may gain some for Christ.

But one thing is beyond her power. She cannot forget that she has been entrusted with certain truths, on the preservation of which her very existence depends. She cannot be Protestant, in the sense in which the word is now used in Germany, and regard the fundamental doctrines of the Creed of Christendom as subjects to be handled with freedom, and perhaps without reverence.[1] The attempts in the second century to go behind the Creeds are at least a sufficient proof that Churches, which do so, can have no continued vitality.

Yet the very fact that after all the

[1] On the other hand, Protestantism has taken its stand in principle on the Gospel exclusively, and declared its readiness at all times to test all doctrines afresh by a true understanding of the Gospel.—Harnack, "History of Dogma," ch. i.

controversies of the past, the Christian Church has at last been brought face to face with the great problem, "What are the essentials of her Faith?" may, if God so will, end in reuniting the Christian world. For three centuries a divided Western Church, much as its divisions are to be regretted, was possible because the essential creed was practically the same for all. Now a great gulf seems to be opening, parting those who follow the Christ worshipped by the Church in all ages and those who, if they call themselves Christians, still do no more than admire an ideal Christ new to the Christian Faith, because divested of all attributes beyond man's comprehension. The time is at hand when men will have to choose between accepting the Faith of the Creeds or nothing—for a system, in which a personal God has no place, where nothing but what is demonstrable to our senses need be believed, where no assurance of a future life is given, can hardly be dignified by the name of a religion, and most assuredly is not Christianity. Once this is realised, may we not hope that the true basis of Christian reunion may be found in the acceptance of

Jesus Christ as the Divine Saviour of the world, Perfect God and perfect man, in whom His Church, parted no more by intestine divisions, can reunite in adoring love?

NOTES

NOTES

NOTE 1.—One object before me throughout these lectures is to show that, whatever may be the verdict of criticism as to the character of the history of Israel and the beliefs indicated in the Old Testament, Judaism is the basis of Christianity. It cannot, I think, be proved that Israel was not unique among all ancient nations, or that the Old Testament does not continue to have a message for the Church. My meaning is admirably expressed by Mr Inge in his paper on the *Person of Christ*, "Contentio Veritatis," p. 66: "The Hebrews learned very early, and never forgot, the two most important maxims of moral education—to reverence God, and to reverence their own bodies. Their religion alone among the primitive religions of the world remained free from degrading myths and untainted by any association with sensuality." Count Tolstoy, on the other hand, insists that our Lord entirely repudiated the law of Moses. "And thus," he says, "when I understood the Law of Jesus to be the Law of Jesus, and not that of Moses *and* Jesus, when I understood that it distinctly denies the law of Moses, the Gospels were to me no more a heap of fragmentary contradictions," etc., etc.—"What I believe," ch. vi.

The effect of this attitude to the healthier aspects of Judaism is seen in Dr Harnack's striking estimate of Count Tolstoy: "Have we not in our own times seen a personality like that of Tolstoy arise from the bosom of the Russian Church—a layman, it is true, but in his writings a genuine Greek Monk, to whom the only chance of Church reform lies in a radical breach with culture and history, and to whom the whole moral code—even marriage—seems defiled

so far as it stands in dependence on sense? What a terrible foe of the Greek Church Manichæism must have been of old, we can learn to calculate from the writings of this extraordinary man. The more serious the Christianity of the Greek Monk, the more helpless is he before the gloomy view that the whole world lieth in the evil one. In the long run the Monk must again flee to Church Authority, lest he fall a slave to Manichæism."—"Monasticism," E.T. p. 63.

NOTE 2.—The danger of religious speculation unchecked by Dogma is exemplified in the history of Gnosticism. "Gnosticism," says Mr Inge, "was rotten before it was ripe." Dogma was still in such a fluid state, that there was nothing to keep speculation within bounds; and the Oriental element, with its insoluble dualism, its fantastic mythology and spiritualism, was too strong for the Hellenic. Gnosticism presents all the features which we shall find to be characteristic of degenerate Mysticism. Not to speak of its oscillations between fanatical austerities and scandalous licence, and its belief in magic and other absurdities, we seem, when we read Irenaeus's description of a Valentinian heretic, to hear the voice of Luther venting his contempt upon some *Geisterer* of the sixteenth century.—"Christian Mysticism," p. 82.

NOTE 3.—His (Butler's) emphasis . . . was laid upon the difficulties of the two schemes (the natural and moral constitution of the world) rather than on their positive lines; and so thoroughly has he made out this point, that, as is well known, the effect upon many has been, not to lead them to accept the Spiritual world on the ground of the Natural, but to make them despair of both,—Drummond "The Natural Law in the Spiritual World" (Introd.). Butler, of course, admits the imperfect character of the natural and moral constitution and government of the world as we now know it. He considers that the general tendency of virtue to produce happiness, and vice misery, is an intimation of a more perfect government hereafter. "From these things together arises a real presumption that the moral scheme of government established in nature shall be carried on much further

towards perfection hereafter; and, I think, a presumption which shall be absolutely completed."

NOTE 4.—Bishop Gore in his *Bampton Lectures for* 1891, in which he expressed himself with great liberality on the subject of the limitation of our Saviour's knowledge during His earthly ministry, will allow no ambiguity as to the doctrine of Christianity concerning His person. "On the doctrine of Christ's person the historical Christian Church has committed itself beyond recall. . . . Certainly the dogmas of the English Church are few and central, and consist mainly of those truths about God and the person of Christ which the Nicene Creed contains. But on these points the Church's requirement is perfectly definite: so that, for example, she constantly requires her ministers to make public and unambiguous profession of their personal adherence to the propositions of the Creed. . . . On these central points it is impossible for the Christian Church to exhibit any wavering or uncertainty" (pp. 25, 26).

NOTE 5.—Hippolytus ("Phil." x. 19) says that Marcion taught that our Lord was displayed in human form (*ὡς ἄνθρωπον φανέντα*), but was not a man, as in the flesh, yet not in the flesh, *δοκήσει πεφηνότα, οὔτε γένεσιν ὑπομείναντα οὐδὲ πάθος, ἀλλὰ τῷ δοκεῖν.*

In "Phil." vii. 31, Hippolytus seems to imply that Marcion denied the perfect goodness of Christ: "Apart from birth in the fifteenth year of Tiberius Caesar He hath come down from heaven, and taught in the synagogue, being midway between evil and good (*μέσον ὄντα κακοῦ καὶ ἀγαθοῦ*)." For if He is a mediator,* he says, He is removed from all the nature of evil. Now the Creator is evil and his works. Wherefore Jesus came down unbegotten, that He might be removed from all evil. And He has been removed from the nature of goodness, that He might be, as Paul says, a mediator,* and as He acknowledges, "Why call ye Me good?"

---

* *μεσότης* is read, *μεσίτης* suggested.

quoted by Harvey on "Irenaeus" I. xxv. 1. Epiphanius says that Marcion read μή με λέγε ἀγαθόν.—See Mr Conybeare's discussion of Luke xviii. 19, *Hibbert Journal*, vol. i. p. 109.

NOTE 6.—Tertullian says that Marcion "licet nesciens" admitted the existence of *seven* Gods and *two* Christs "alter qui apparuit sub Tiberio, alter qui a Creatore repromittitur," i. 15. If Marcion's God and the Creator have their sphere, then the sphere of God is greater than He, and unbegotten, uncreated, and eternal. Matter as evil cannot be made by the good God, consequently like space fulfils the condition of godhead. Thus there are three gods in the higher sphere (1) God ; (2) His sphere ; (3) Matter ; and in the lower four : (1) The Creator ; (2) His sphere ; (3) Matter and (4) Evil. Tertullian with his usual acuteness has touched the weakest spot in Marcionism. Epiphanius says Marcion had three gods (1) The Unseen ; (2) The Seen or the Creator ; (3) διάβολον δὲ τρίτον καὶ μέσον τῶν δύο τούτων, τοῦ τε ὁρατοῦ καὶ τοῦ ἀοράτου. The schisms of the sect, *e.g.* those of Apelles (Euseb. *H.E.* v. 13), and of Prepon (Hippolytus, "Phil." vii. 19), turned on the number of principles which existed.

NOTE 7.—There is an influential school of thinkers, very numerous in Germany, who believe that in the historical Christ, regarded as mere man, we have a figure which can serve as the model of the highest perfection, and which can assure us of the perfectibility of human nature with all the greater certainty that He never claimed to be other than a man like ourselves.—Mr Inge on *The Person of Christ*, in "Contentio Veritatis," p. 95. An excellent statement of the position of thinkers of the Ritschlian and Neo-Kantian Schools.

Thus, Dr Sanday, in the *Journal of Theological Studies*, vol. iii. p. 226, quotes Dr Gardner's "Historic View of the New Testament," p. 99 : "The Person of the Master is to His followers, to the Church, of incomparably greater interest than His teaching. Christianity is at bottom not the perpetuation of a school, but the continuation of a life. It is what Jesus was, not what He taught, that has been the salva-

tion of the world." In one breath, adds Dr Sanday, we are told this, and in the next we are told that the historical data are insufficient to determine what Jesus was. This is the impotent conclusion of the whole matter.

NOTE 8.—Dr Sanday truly says: "The Christian emotions have their roots in certain historical events; and as without those events they would never have come into existence, so also it is not likely that they can be maintained without reference to them. From the days of the Primitive Church onwards we can see that the minds of Christians have been full of one great presupposition. Remove that presupposition and the rest falls to the ground."—*Journal of Theological Studies*, *l.c.* p. 225.

NOTE 9.—So the late Mr Aubrey Moore insists in his article on the *Christian Doctrine of God*, in "Lux Mundi."

Religion demands a personal object, be that object one or many. It is committed to a belief in the moral relationship between God and man. . . . So long as philosophy has no room for a personal God, religion must exclude philosophy. The whole issue of the controversy lies here. If the belief in a personal God is to be called anthropomorphism, religion is hopelessly anthropomorphic. With the disappearance of anthropomorphism in this sense, as Professor Fiske sees, religion disappears (p. 64).

"Such a Deity will be described by some as 'anthropomorphic.' I am content that this should be so. Some of us will prefer an anthropomorphic Deity to the God who is only matter disguised, or a mere intellectual abstraction, or a magnified devil. An anthropomorphic Deity in this sense is, I venture to contend, the only Deity who satisfies the demands of our rational and our moral nature."—"Contentio Veritatis," p. 46.

Dr Gardner sees the extreme difficulty in applying the idea of personality to God: "We cannot dissociate love and care from personality, etc. . . . But when in a mood of philosophic analysis we approach the attribution of personality to

God, we at once see that it cannot be regarded as logically defensible. . . . In fact there is in the communication of God with man a remarkable feature, in that the communication seems to shut out all the rest of mankind, that we have to do as Cardinal Newman says, *solus cum solo*."—"Exploratio Evangelica," p. 39.

Later Dr Gardner says, "God as known to man includes personality, rather than is limited by personality."

NOTE 10.—Dr Gardner gives the religious view of sin in the following paragraph, which is the more weighty since his opinions are not in accordance with strict orthodoxy.

"Moralists regard ill-doing as mainly to be regretted because it tends to diminish happiness, the happiness of the doer and of those affected by the deed. Religion, going deeper, regards it as vile in itself, as showing a wrong condition of the heart, as indicating a will out of harmony with its surroundings and with the purposes of God. To the sinner it imputes not imperfection but guilt, and it declares that whether he suffers from wrong-doing or not, at all events he deserves to suffer. He has risen in rebellion against his legitimate Ruler. He has actually in some small matters thwarted the intentions of the Most High," etc.—"Exploratio Evangelica," p. 19.

NOTE 11.—Dr Haeckel puts the case with sufficient clearness: "The neurological problem of consciousness is only a special case of the all-comprehending cosmological problem, the question of substance. . . . Consciousness, like feeling and willing among the higher animals, is a mechanical work of the ganglion cells, and as such must be carried back to chemical and physical events in the plasma of these. And by the employment of the genetic and comparative method we reach the conviction that consciousness, and consequently reason also, is not a brain function exclusively peculiar to man; it occurs also in many of the higher animals, not in Vertebrates only, but even in Articulates. Only in degree, though in a higher state of cultivation, does the consciousness

of man differ from that of the more perfect lower animals, and the same is true of all other activities of the human soul.—"Monism," pp. 47-48, E.T.

NOTE 12.—"It has simply been assumed," says Professor Budde, "that the religion of Yahweh, in distinction from other religions, had a deep moral trait, or, to put it more personally, that Moses was gifted with religious genius, which qualified him to supply the Yahweh religion with its ethical content, so that no more remained for the prophets than to bring this to a full understanding and recognition. Nothing is explained by such an assumption. For one thing is certain from the outset: Yahweh, when accepted by Israel, was the god of a rude nomad tribe in the desert" (p. 30). And again: "Many scholars, whilst relinquishing everything else, have tried to save the Ten Commandments, the 'Mosaic' moral law, for these oldest times. Now the Ten Commandments base all their demands on the nature of the God of Israel. If, then, they really did come from this period, it appears that there existed, even in the earliest times, a conception of God so sublime that hardly anything could have remained for the prophets to do" (p. 32). The possibility of Jehovah revealing His will to Israel does not seem to be considered.—Budde, "Religion of Israel to the Exile."

NOTE 13.—The old view of the Atonement, which used to be taught as the very essence of Evangelical Christianity, has often a repellent effect on the heart and intellect of to-day. Contrast it with the following words on the Baptist's exclamation, "Behold the Lamb of God":—

"The mistake of subsequent writers has lain in placing the emphasis too exclusively upon the death of Jesus as the means of redemption. The faith that brings forgiveness, as St John's Gospel makes quite clear, is faith in a living person and in His life of willing sacrifice seen as a proof of love to God and man. The true life lies in the assimilation of the human life to the life of God. The true life, therefore, is one of sacrifice to love, of which death is the consumma

tion and final proof."—Mr Wild on *The Teaching of Christ*, "Contentio Veritatis," p. 161.

NOTE 14.—These are the words of Dr W. James, who is assuredly not a foe to Christianity, and speaks in the character of a Christian teacher.

"The pivot round which the religious life, as we have traced it, revolves, is the interest of the individual in his private personal destiny. Religion, in short, is a monumental chapter in the history of human egotism. The gods believed in —whether by crude savages or by men disciplined intellectually—agree with each other in recognising personal calls. Religious thought is carried on in terms of personality, this being, in the world of religion, the one fundamental fact. To-day, quite as much as at any previous age, the religious individual tells you that the divine meets him on the basis of his personal concerns.

"Science, on the other hand, has ended by utterly repudiating the personal point of view. . . . Though the scientist may individually nourish a religion, and be a theist in his irresponsible hours, the days are over when it could be said that for Science herself 'the heavens declare the glory of God.' . . . The books of Natural Theology which satisfied the intellects of our grandfathers seem to us quite grotesque, representing, as they did, a God who conformed the largest things of nature to the paltriest of our private wants. The god whom Science recognises must be a god of universal laws exclusively, a god who does a wholesale and not a retail business."—"Varieties of Religious Experience," pp. 491 ff. The word "God" has here really no meaning such as we are accustomed to attach to it. On p. 516 we read, "God is the natural appellation, for us Christians at least, for the supreme reality, so I will call this higher part of the universe by the name of God."

NOTE 15.—An admirable example of a man entirely destitute of religious feeling is given by Dr James :—

Q. *What does religion mean to you?*

A. It means nothing; and it seems, so far as I can observe, useless to others. . . . Praying, singing of hymns, and services are pernicious—they teach us to rely on some supernatural power, when we ought to rely on ourselves. I *tee*totally disbelieve in a God, etc. etc.

Q. *What comes before your mind corresponding to the word God, Heaven, Angels, etc.?*

A. Nothing whatever. I am a man without a religion. These words mean so much mystic bosh.

Q. *Have you had any experiences which appeared providential?*

A. None whatever. There is no agency of the superintending kind. A little judicious observation as well as knowledge of scientific law will convince any one of that fact.

Q. *What things work most strongly on your emotions?*

A. Lively songs and music, "Pinafore" instead of an Oratorio. I like Scott, Burns, Byron, Longfellow, especially Shakespeare. Of songs, the "Star-Spankled Banner," "America," "Marseillaise," and all moral and soul-stirring songs; but wishy-washy hymns are my detestation, etc. etc.

Q. *What's your notion of sin?*

A. It seems to me that sin is a condition, a disease, incidental on man's development not being sufficiently advanced, etc.

Q. *What is your temperament?*

A. Nervous, active, wide-awake mentally and physically. Sorry that Nature compels us to sleep at all.

"Varieties of Religious Experiences," p. 93.

What sympathy can a man of this type have for art, literature, or even the laboriously minute investigations of Modern Science? I would fain it were possible to disagree with Dr James when he says, "I think you will recognise in him, coarse-meated and incapable of wounded spirit that he is, a sufficiently familiar contemporary type."

NOTE 16.—Mozley, "Lectures on the Old Testament," p. 95, speaks of Oriental justice as going "into margins, excesses,

superfluous surplusses of retribution." Our Lord spoke to Orientals of love towards enemies, a thing even more unnatural to their minds than it is to ours.

NOTE 17.—Count Tolstoy denies that these things are impossible in a wonderfully interesting chapter, *The Key to the Gospel Teaching*, ch. 1. of "What I believe" (My Religion). The conclusions which he arrives at, as Dr Harnack points out, are such as would render civilised life impossible. It must be remembered that, despite his acts of self-sacrifice and his apprehension of many truths of the Gospel, Count Tolstoy is bitterly opposed to the entire scheme of revelation, and the Holy Orthodox Church can hardly be reproached with intolerance for objecting to such language as the following:—

"Not to mention that absurd sacrament about which Voltaire even used to say that though many different religions had existed, and still existed, never before had there been one the principal religious act of which consisted of eating one's God. To pass these things by, what can be more senseless than the assertions that the Mother of God was both a mother and a virgin—that the sky opened and a voice was heard issuing from it—that Jesus flew away into the skies and is now sitting there on the right hand of the Father—or that God is One in Three, and not three gods like Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva, but One, and at the same time Three."—"What is Religion," ch. 5.

Rationalists in some cases deny the possibility of any such moral miracles as a total change of character. A friend, for whose judgment I have the highest respect, has criticised my remarks on p. 106, "that only our ignorance of the laws which govern our moral being, prevent our recognition of the fact that to change a man's heart and affections is as great as a moral miracle." But the following remarks show that a thoroughgoing rationalist is at one with me:—

"A man may fancy that he is free to do right or wrong just as he pleases, but a very little reflection will show him that he knows and recognises by his conduct and by his habits of thought and speech that the idea is a delusion. . . .

Only by slow degrees can the virtuous man sink into vice. And the converse of all this is equally true. The immoral man and the criminal are not free to become virtuous and law-abiding members of the community at any moment when some passing whim or feeling of remorse may impel them in this direction."—*Mr Balfour's "Apologetics" critically examined*, p. 57.

NOTE 18.—We must then, on this hypothesis, face the probability that Jesus Christ was not only a mere man, but a sinful man like ourselves. Is it only the force of old associations which makes us shrink with dismay from such an admission? I think not. The sinlessness of Christ is the one of His divine attributes which we cannot afford to part with. We might dispense with the belief in His power over nature whilst He lived as a man amongst men; but to give up His divine *character* is to sever the most precious link in the chain which binds heaven and earth together. If there has been no Incarnation, if no morally perfect Being, perfect even as our Father in Heaven is perfect, has ever lived on earth, then there has been and is no revelation of God as a Person.—Mr Inge in *The Person of Christ*, "Contentio Veritatis," p. 97.

NOTE 19.—The argument of Tertullian is as follows:—

The law belonged to the old dispensation (Lex et prophetae usque ad Ioannem). The subject of the Epistle to the Galatians is—Legis destructio, et Evangelii aedificatio. The law was abrogated *by the will of the Creator* (Legis discessionem venientem de Creatoris dispositione). Had St Paul preached a new God he would certainly have mentioned it here. But his wonder that the Galatians had changed to another Gospel implies that they had changed "Ex conversatione, non ex religione; ex disciplina, non ex divinitate."

The Marcionites maintained that, when St Paul said "If an angel from heaven should preach (other than ye have received), let him be anathema," he refers to the Creator. But Marcion does not quote the first part of the verse where

St Paul makes mention of himself, "Though we," etc. (v. 2). Then comes the discussion of Gal. ii. and the visit of St Paul to Jerusalem "after fourteen years." Tertullian shows how loyal St Paul was to the Law throughout the discussion with the Judaizers (ii. 3). When Gal. iii. is discussed, Marcion is blamed for his clumsiness in allowing passages to stand which are fatal to his theory. He erased verses 6-9, and retained verse 26. "Erubescat spongia Marcionis," says Tertullian. The meaning of the words "infirma et mendica elementa" are next discussed, and these are shown to be not the elements of nature, but the teaching of the Law.

Finally Tertullian comments on St Paul's summary of the Law in Gal. v. 14, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." The law of love must surely proceed from one God (v. 4).

NOTE 20.—The advent of modified uniformitarian principles has all but banished the word catastrophe. Religious doctrines, many of them at least, have been up to this time all but as *catastrophic* as the old Geology. They are not on the lines of Nature as we have learned to decipher her.—Drummond, "Natural Law," etc., Introduction.

NOTE 21.—"To both the revelation of God in Christ was all in all, but in Marcion there was a striving to go back to the original fountain, and to get rid of the intervention of all authority or tradition whatever. In this respect he is the representative of a Protestant spirit, although not rightly understanding itself, and sometimes wandering into the opposite direction. Tertullian, on the other hand, developed himself in dependence on the Church tradition of his times." —Neander, "Antagonistikus," p. 490 (Bohn Series).

NOTE 22.—This seems to be the main argument of Dr Harnack's valuable lectures on "What is Christianity?" (*Das Wesen des Christenthums*). Yet nothing can express what I mean better than when he says, "It is not miracles that matter; the question on which everything turns is whether we are yoked to an inexorable necessity, or whether a God

exists who rules and governs, and whose power to compel Nature we can move by prayer, and make a part of our experience" (p. 30, E.T.). But is this logical? Is not the revelation of God to man that He does hear prayer, and has power to compel what we call Nature, the greatest of miracles?

Further on, Dr Harnack says: "It is the 'knowledge of God' that makes the sphere of the Divine Sonship. It is in this knowledge that He came to know the sacred Being who rules in heaven and earth as Father, as *His* Father. The consciousness which He possessed of being the Son of God is, therefore, nothing but the practical knowledge of knowing God as the Father, and as His Father. Rightly understood, the name of Son means nothing but the knowledge of God" (p. 128). But how did Jesus come to know God in this absolutely unique sense? This Dr Harnack says is "His secret, and no psychology will fathom it." Yet, according to St John, our Lord declares His pre-existence, and says to the Father, "Thou lovest Me before the foundation of the world"; and this amply accounts for His Unique Sonship.

NOTE 23.—In our days there are also many who fancy that it is possible for religion to grow and prosper without any sort of doctrine. Such a notion has prompted the foundation, especially in America, of so-called ethical societies, the members of which think that they may agree in principles of conduct, while differing in philosophic and religious views. . . . But in ordinary times, and among thoughtful men, religious doctrine is as necessary to the healthy and normal development of a community as are faith and self-denial.—Dr Gardner, in "Exploratio Evangelica," p. 5.

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